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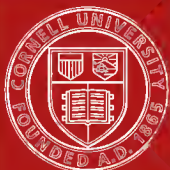
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# ALONG THE ROAD

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By

ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON

Fellow of Magdalene College, Cambridge

*Delayed it may be for more lives yet,  
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few!*

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## PREFACE

I THINK it is often a pity to collect and republish contributions to periodical literature, and authors are apt to feel too tenderly, with a sort of fatherly regard, about the little crops of their own minds. Articles written for journals are apt, of course, to be topical and occasional things, composed very often, by the necessity of the case, rapidly and hurriedly, on some momentary subject. They are then little more than improvisations, spun out of impromptu materials, and there has been no time for them to take shape in the writer's mind.

But this does not apply to all such writing, and I can honestly say that it does not apply to the majority of the little essays which I have contributed week by week to the *Church Family Newspaper*, under the heading of *Along the Road*. I have for a long time had a good many articles in stock, and even in proof, so that I have not written from hand to mouth. The majority of them are simply little essays, composed deliberately and carefully on subjects which occupied my mind; and I have had so many letters from unknown correspondents about these articles, that

I think that some of my readers may like to have a selection of them in a more permanent form. I have omitted all articles which have been written to order on some topic of the day, and all of a purely controversial type, such as I have had from time to time to write, not very willingly; and all those which have aroused, however unintentionally, the susceptibilities of readers. I began to write the series in a time of considerable depression, when I was recovering from a long illness, and when I was afraid that I might be unequal to the task of regular composition; and though I tried to write cheerfully, the shadow of ill-health fell over some of the earlier ones—and these I have omitted.

Let me say shortly what I have been aiming at in the entire series. It seems to me that what we Englishmen often suffer from is a want of interest in ideas. I think that as a race we have some very fine qualities,—a sturdy and kindly common-sense, first of all, which permits us to view things justly and reasonably, and keeps us both from undue excitement and unbalanced depression. I believe that we are peaceable, orderly, and laborious; and we have a real modesty, which prevents us from dwelling too much on our achievements and performances, and disposes us not to be careful to claim credit for what we do. And I think, too, that we try to live by principle rather than impulsively.

But, on the other hand, we are conventional and

unintelligent, and think far too much of wealth and position; we are averse to analysis and speculation and experiments. We take certain rather doubtful things for granted, and dislike originality and enthusiasm. It seems to me that we do not think enough about our daily life, and do not ask ourselves enough why we believe things, or even if we do really believe them. In moral matters we are really rather fatalistic, we trust instinct more than reason, and do not sufficiently regard the power we have, within certain limits, to change ourselves. We are apt to make up our minds about many matters early in life, and we take a foolish pride in what we call consistency, which often means little more than a habit of rejecting all arguments and all evidence which tell against our prejudices. We have, in fact, very little flexibility of mind. Again, I think that we are apt to neglect the wonderful treasure of ancient and beautiful associations which have accumulated in a land that has for so long been uninvaded, and where we have consequently been able to develop our own institutions without interruption. I am often amazed, as I explore England, to find hamlet after hamlet with a fine church, an old manorial house, many graceful dwellings, and obviously with a clear and delicate history of its own, if only it were recorded! All that we are apt to take as a matter of course, and neglect in a dull and careless way, as if it were not worth notice.

So I have had these two aims very firmly in view—to try in the first place to interest readers in little problems of life and character, all the clash and interplay of human qualities, so fresh, so unaccountable, so marvellously interesting, which spring out of our daily relations with other human beings. The longer I live, the more wonderful every day appears to me the infinite complexity and beauty of human intercourse, and the sense that some very great and noble problem is being worked out by slow gradations and with infinite delay. Civilisation has this potent effect, that it does away with isolation and hostility; it makes men and women feel that they cannot guard themselves apart from others, or follow selfishly their own designs, but that we are all deeply dependent on each other both for encouragement and help; that our smallest actions and our lightest thoughts can and must affect other lives, and that good and evil alike must go on seeding and flowering, till we are perfect in patience and in love; and I have been struck, too, the more I have known of men, to find how often they are conscious, in a dim and uncertain way, of high and beautiful ideals, which they yet seem pathetically unable to work out, incapable of applying to the facts of life, though sorrowfully aware that they are not making the best either of life or of themselves. This has given me increasingly the sense of a very wonderful and far-off future for mankind,—for all that



live and strive, hope and sorrow,—not only upon earth, but beyond the veil of mortality. That future, I believe with all my soul, is a future of joy, because joy is the native air of the spirit, which cannot acquiesce in sorrow and pain, though it can bear them, if it believes that they are meant ultimately to minister to joy and peace. The more that we study ourselves and others, the more rich and complex does the possibility appear; and the more that we can keep our hearts on the permanent and the spiritual, and put what is temporary and material in its right place, the better for us. The world seems often full of misdirected feeling, grief, and disappointment over things which are not worth the emotion, bitter strife over paltry causes, stubborn prejudices, and worst of all a harsh belief that if people will not try to be happy in what we happen to consider the right way, they had better not be happy at all. That is in my belief the worst fault of the English character, the hard insistence on our own fancies and theories, the radical lack of sympathy and mutual understanding; so I have tried my hand at attempting to explain men and women to themselves and others, and pressing on my readers, as far as I could, the supreme worth of conciliation, appreciation, tolerance, and brotherly love. If I could but say or express how infinitely I desire that! I do not at all recommend a weak abandonment of our own cherished beliefs; but it is possible to hold

a view firmly and courageously, as the best for oneself, without attempting to condemn and discredit the sincere beliefs of others:

And secondly, I have tried to awaken the interest, which we can find, if we only look for it, in common and ordinary things, in the places we see, in the words which we hear read week by week, in the simple experiences of life. One of the worst foes of all spiritual and mental energy is the dulness that creeps over hard-working people, the stolid comfortable acquiescence in daily grubbiness, the apathy which sees the beautiful lights of life going out one by one without an attempt to rekindle them. One sees and hears things so dully and incuriously; and yet if one sets oneself to say "What does that mean? What lies behind that? How does it come to exist so?" we find a whole wealth of striking and tender associations, reaching far back into the past, and all most gently bound up with what we are.

Ideas and associations! Those are the best and dearest part of life, next to human relations. And they are not outside of our reach. We only, many of us, require to be taught how to begin, what sort of questions to ask ourselves, what little experiments in thought and feeling we can try. That has been the simple task I have set before me, and no one can wish more heartily than I do, that it had been better fulfilled. Because, as I have said, I am daily more amazed and delighted at the wonderful and incommunicable in-

terest and beauty of life, the secrets that it holds, the problems—some of them sad enough—that it offers, and the marvellous hope in the mighty purposes of God that lie behind it all. The House of Life in which we abide, in the days of our pilgrimage, can be made, with so little care and trouble, into a great and gracious place; as the old wise writer said, “Through wisdom is an house builded, and by understanding it is established, and by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches!”

A. C. B.

THE OLD LODGE,  
MAGDALENE COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE,  
*Aug. 5, 1912.*



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# Along the Road

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## OLD ENGLAND

WE hear much said nowadays about the Empire, and said wisely and bravely, too; and we are told to hold out hands of brotherhood, and to keep our hearts warm towards our unknown friends and fellow-citizens over the sea, and to be proud of the great outward-beating wave of English life and talk and thought which surges over the globe. And, indeed, England may well rejoice in the old blessing of the Psalms that she is truly a joyful mother of children; though I sometimes wish that it were all done and said a little less militantly, and that the happy family would think and talk a little less of crowding out and keeping in their corners the other children who have their playground here, too, by the far-off purpose of God.

But while we may wholesomely exult in the generous pulse of English blood which thrills far and wide through the earth, replenishing and

subduing it, we may sometimes wisely turn our thoughts homewards and inwards and backwards, to the wonderful currents of history and tradition that have moulded our island race and made us what we are. We are apt to forget, we town-dwellers, what an incomparable treasure of old and beautiful things is hidden in our land, in village and hamlet, in the forest clearings, and the remote valleys and the foldings of the hills. If one explores a bit of quiet England, and finds leisure to look about for ruined castles and priories, for old houses and nestling churches, one comes to realise what long, quiet spaces of homely life have been lived century by century, in days before railways tied town to town, and before the humblest labourer could read day by day, as he can now in the newspaper, the whole pageant of the life which the world has been living the day before.

It is a mistake perhaps to live too much in the past; one invests it all in the mind with a romantic, golden haze; one forgets its miseries and its cruelties, and one comes to sorrow feebly over the ills about one, as though they were newly-risen and fresh-engendered evils; as if the old days were all full of peace and quiet and wholesome labour; when, as a matter of fact, the conditions of life for the mass of the population are infinitely brighter, more decent, more sensible, more comfortable than they used to be, and the minds of far more men are bent on helping and

cleansing and lifting up the souls and bodies of those who have fallen by the wayside, and find the great wheels of life running too tyrannously past them.

But the old life had a beauty and a stillness of its own, for all that, when there was less motion and stir, less sound and foam; there was less arranging how to live, and more acceptance of life. Men whose range was more limited, concentrated, no doubt, a stronger emotion on just the touches of grandeur and dignity and beauty that the circle of the hills enfolded; and the sight, as one sees it, if one wanders afield day by day, of the beautiful churches and manor-houses, even of the very cottages and barns, gives the feeling that men in the old days had a stronger sense of the fine simplicities and even statelinesses of life, when they built with roof-tile and gable, with mullion and timber-tie, than when they bring slate and yellow brick in a straw-packed truck, and run up a corrugated iron barn in the corner of the high-walled byre.

Here is a little picture of what I saw one day not long ago, as I traced the green valley of the Windrush through the bare Cotswold hills. The Windrush is as sweet a stream as its airy, ruffled name suggests, full of clear pools and swift windings, with its long, swaying weeds, and bubbling weirs, as it runs among level meadows, between bare hillsides.

Over the fields we saw a tiny belfried church,

in a wide meadow; a little path led to it; and when we were close at hand we could see that it had a minute ancient chancel, of singularly rude masonry, and a small Tudor nave tacked on at a curious angle. Inside it was one of the homeliest of sanctuaries, with its irregular Georgian pews, faint traces of rusty frescoes, a pretty Jacobean pulpit, and a poppyhead or two of gnarled oak. But what a vista of age was opened out, when one found the chancel to be paved in places with a Roman mosaic, the bounding lines of which ran close to the walls, and left no sort of doubt that the chancel, even in its very walls, were the remnants of the hall of some Roman manor-house, converted, when derelict, into the simplest of Norman chapels. It was no doubt the home of some Roman settlers, and clearly inhabited for several generations; probably not even fortified, so full are these valleys of great wealthy Roman houses, with cloister and colonnade and bath and hall, all testifying to a quiet colonial life in a peaceful land. What a mystery hangs over it all! These great country houses, no doubt, were one by one evacuated, as the Roman legions were withdrawn, to crumble down into decay among brushwood and gorse. And then came the slow growth of kingdoms, and the spread of the Faith, till the old ruin among the thickets was repaired into a tiny Christian church, who knows by what hands, or how many dim years ago!

Then we sauntered on, and presently came to broad turfed terraces, in a pasture, with some odd square pools below them, and so to a small hamlet with a little church and a gabled manor-house. The church was full of great monuments, cavaliers, and knights, with kirtled spouses, lying stiffly, their hands beneath their heads, their ruddy painted faces, and their eyes looking tranquilly out into the church. There were brasses, too, on the pavement, and later, more pompous monuments, with weeping cherubs, and inscriptions in flowing polysyllables, telling one of nothing that one cared to know, except of the eminent virtues which grief seems always to take for granted.

The history of some great house was evidently hidden here; the name of the family was Fettiplace. When I got back home, I looked it up, and the strangest story was revealed. The Fettiplaces were an ancient stock which grew slowly, by inheritance and alliance, into extraordinary wealth and station. They had land in sixteen counties, and one of the heads of the family actually married a Braganza, a daughter of a King of Portugal. The family, for all its influence, never gave a single statesman or judge or bishop or admiral or general to England. They had no record of public service, only of great and growing prosperity. Then they began to dwindle; the baronetcy became extinct, the name was still kept up in the female line, and then

the great house went out in the snuff; ugly stories were told of them; they became imbecile and drunken, and at last the family became wholly extinct. The great house, which had stood, with its façade and cupolas, among the terraces we had seen in the pasture, was pulled down, the lands were sold, and the whole became a proud and selfish and wicked memory of great opportunities thrown away, and vast revenues lavishly squandered.

That seems to me a very sad and dreary old story—the fall of a great house! One does not want to be too solemn over it, but it is a sinister warning enough that one had better not build too much on the brave shows of life, pomp, and property and house and influence; that the world is not a place where it is well to scramble for one's satisfaction, and waste what one cannot use; and that it may be better after all to give than to receive, though we most of us seem to hold the contrary.

It did somehow seem to me that day, among those high-piled, much-escutcheoned monuments, that we many of us do pursue shadows; that the treasures of life are wholesome work and deep affections, and the simple things that amuse and occupy and uplift. Yet we pass over these things, many of us, as commonplace and humdrum, and set our minds on some silly ambition, some paltry fame, some trivial distinction, and forget that the true life is streaming past unheeded.

Is this all a very threadbare philosophy? I do not know. I can only say, very humbly, that it has taken me fifty years of varied and interesting life to perceive it, to sort the gold from the dross; to see how I have wasted my days in the excited pursuit of shadows, and often despised the sweet, simple, enriching, increasing things that lay all about me, like the daisies on a green pasture.

I could not, in the presence of those stiff knights and dainty ladies, in their arched and emblemed niches, feel that we had got hold of the right proportions of life. Perhaps the Fettiplaces, for all their estates and grandeurs and eminent virtues, did live simple lives amidst it all, loving the pure air that blew over the spare hillsides, and the clear stream that gushed beneath their gardens, with their jolly boys and girls growing up about them. Yet something more ought to have come out of it all; some sharing of good things, some example of neighbourly life, some love and sympathy for poorer brethren. One does not like to feel that these virtues have been developed—for they have much increased of late—out of pure terror at the rising forces of democracy. It all ought to have grown up spontaneously, and to have been generously conceded; and I doubt if it was.

Indeed, if further proof were needed of something vile and ugly in the old life of that still countryside, I saw a day or two later, hardly a mile from the Fettiplace monuments, a solitary

oak, standing far away from the coverts, with a rough old path leading to it across the fields. On the trunk, beneath a great horizontal out-thrusting bough, were some initials scarred deep into the wood, with a date more than a century old. The gibbet tree! The initials are those of two unhappy men, highway robbers, I think, whose mouldering bodies must have dangled there, knocking in an ugly fashion against the tree, as the wind blew over the wood, with what horrors of scent and corruption! One thinks of the dreadful group gathered there; the desperate man, with the rope round his neck thrown over the bough; the officers, the sheriff, the magistrates on horseback, the staring crowd; and then the struggling breath, the inflated eyes, the convulsed limbs. One must not put all that out of sight, as one dreams over the honest, quiet, simple days of old!

And what can we make of it all, the grass-grown terraces, the Roman pavement, the solitary tree—difficult pieces of a strange puzzle, to be fitted together? One thing, to my mind, emerges, that one must not judge harshly, or hope hastily, or believe tamely, or dream comfortably, but try to see life whole, to face its harshnesses and its horrors, and yet to hold very firmly to a vast scheme, working itself out, with marvellous patience and exactness, nothing wasted, nothing slurred over, and all in the Mind and Heart of God.



## AN AUTUMN LANDSCAPE

I WAS walking the other day with a friend at Cambridge along the road that runs up Madingley Hill. In most countries this would be accounted a trifling undulation, but here in Cambridgeshire it is a bold and conspicuous eminence, commanding a wide view of the world. Beyond the groves of Girton, far to the north, we could see the dim towers of Ely, not unlike a gigantic locomotive, across the great Fen, with its rich blues and greens, all mellowed and refined by the thin autumnal mist; the pale fallows, the large pastures sloped away pleasantly from our feet, with here and there a row of elms, or a yellowing spinney. We halted at a gate by the edge of the wood, and my friend said to me, "I wonder what it is that makes all this so beautiful. There is nothing wild or romantic about it; it has no features; every acre has its simple use; it has all been tamed and tilled. It would be hard to explain to any one what it is that is beautiful about it; and yet I can fancy that if one were compelled to live abroad, in a place as beautiful as Florence, or even in some tropical landscape, one

would revert in thought and even with a sort of passionate longing to these level pastures and tame woods, as to something almost inexpressibly dear and delightful."

"Yes," I said, "I can well imagine it; but would not that be partly just the sense of home and familiar things, a countryside peopled with men whose talk one could understand, and with birds and plants whose habits and forms one knew—a sort of revolt against things splendid and striking, which had yet no happy and moving associations? So much of the beauty of things, as well as of places, depends upon the happy mind one carried about among them long ago, when one read one's own inner delight into tree and wall. I am sure that I love the elm because of the playing-fields at Eton! The very word elm calls up the look of the great trees, with all their towering foliage, on a summer evening beside the Thames, or the sight of them seen through the open windows of a schoolroom in a spring morning—'the times,' as Tennyson said,

'When I remember to have been  
Joyful and free from blame.'

We can't isolate ourselves and look at all things impartially and dispassionately, however much we try—and after all, who *would* try?"

"Oh! of course," he said; "half the beauty of it is memory and old delights; but there must be

something more than that. Is it perhaps not a sense of beauty at all, but an ancient, instinctive sense of prosperity and husbandry—the well-reaped field, the plentiful pasture, some of which may come our way in the shape of loaves and sirloins.”

“No,” I said, “that is really too horrible to suggest. Come, let us take the landscape to pieces, and see if we can detect its secret.”

So we stood for a little by the gate and measured it with our eyes, as the Romans used to say.

“It is a good deal of it colour,” I said. “First of all there is the sky—we have not apportioned *that* out, at all events, to landlords and syndicates! There is something free and essentially liberal about the sky; and that sapphire blue, with a hint of golden haze about it, is not wholly utilitarian. Those big, packed clouds down there, like snow-clad bluffs, I have no particular use for them, nor do I expect any benefits from them; but they are vaguely exciting and delightful; and then the delicate curves and converging lines of the fields are beautiful in their way, neither disorderly nor too geometrical; and there is a sense, too, that the whole thing is not hopelessly deliberate. If this were a treeless expanse, geometrically squared, it would not be so attractive. The whole thing has a history. The hamlets signify wells and springs, the byways meandering about stand for old forest tracks;

that lane down there which gives a sudden wriggle, quite unintelligible now, probably means a gigantic fallen tree which it was too much trouble to remove. And then the straight lines of the Roman roads—there is something invigorating about them.”

“But you are going back to associations,” he said, “and I don’t deny them; what about the admixture of wildness in the whole scene? I don’t see much trace of that.”

“Oh,” I said, “there are little bits of dingles everywhere, hedgerows unreasonably big, elms where they are not needed; a nice pit there, fringed with reeds and full of water, where gravel was dug long ago. Some perfectly meaningless pieces of old woodland, left there with a sense of pleasure and shade, I think, and the trees themselves, how charmingly irregular! I grant that the great black poplars down there are awkward enough, but look at the little gnarled, pol-larded elms round the farmstead, and the big sycamore in that close. There is just enough liberty about, to emphasise the fact that it is not all for mere use. But I grant you that it is all impossible to define; one can’t get behind the joy of colour, and in England we care about colour very much, and not much about form.”

“Yes,” said my friend, “I was told a curious thing about that the other day. A young diplomat said to me that he had been calling on a small farmer in Japan, quite a poor man; on the

centre of the table in his room lay a large flint stone. It looked so unaccountable that he said at last to the farmer, 'What is that stone? There must be some story about it, I suppose. Why do you have it there?' The farmer said, 'Why, of course, you see what a beautiful stone it is? I have it here to look at because it is so beautiful.' My friend had noticed in the garden outside the house a little rockery of similar stones, and he said, 'Well, you have some stones outside in the garden—this looks to me very much like those.' 'Oh, no,' said the farmer, 'those are quite common stones, useful enough, and some of them even pleasant, but not beautiful like this one. Come,' he added, 'we will take it out and look at it side by side with them.' He did so, and pointed out all the superior grace and elegance of the original stone. My friend said that he simply had no idea what the farmer meant, and it was as if some sense were wanting in him. The farmer added, 'It is a famous stone, too! People come to see it from a long way round, and I have even been offered a large price for it. But I cannot part with it, it is too lovely. When I come in tired with my work, I can forget my weariness in looking at my stone and thinking how fine it is.'"

"Yes," I said, "that is a good story; and one hears, too, how workmen in Japan will keep a flower by them to look at in the pauses of their work, for refreshment, where an Englishman

would need a pint of beer to make him a cheerful countenance!"

"I don't suppose," said my friend, "that any one of the people who work about here in the fields have any sense of the beauty of it at all? They like the scene, perhaps, in a vague way, as something they are familiar with. But I have seen this very hill on which we stand, with the long wood on the top and the broken mill, black and solemn, with an evening sky behind it, all transfigured with a sense of something that it is just impossible to analyse or explain; and, of course, the most ordinary places, at dawn or sunset, if only they are quiet and simple enough, and not disfigured by some smart and intrusive piece of modernity,—like that corrugated iron barn-roof there, or that row of admirable cottages,—can take on a beauty of mystery and peace which seems to come from some old and pure source; and this quiet kind of beauty is perhaps the truest of all, this 'field-space and sky-silence,' which can respond to a hundred different moods. and gains all the mystery and depth of the true symbol by not too insistently claiming a special and peculiar loveliness of its own."

"Yes," I said, "I am sure you are right about this; and I always suspect the sense of beauty in a man who goes in search of what is melodramatic and romantic in scenery, and complains of the dulness of the simple countryside. How one's heart pines, among the snow-peaks and pine-clad

gorges of Switzerland, for a row of elms and a gabled farmstead! If one loves the unadorned landscape, one may take a draught every now and then of richer and more intoxicating scenery, like that of our English lakes—and yet half the beauty of that is its combination of great mountain-shapes and rugged ridges with the sweet and pastoral life that nestles in its dingles and green valleys. The joy of a mountain walk there is the passing through the level pastures, with their clear streams and tree-clad knolls, up into the steeper valleys, where the brook comes tinkling and dripping down among the thickets, with the steeply sloping stone-walled meadows, the quaint huddled hamlets propped at every kind of pleasant angle, and so out on to the moorland and up the green shoulders of the hill; and then the return, dropping from the bleak, black mountain-head down the wind-swept valley, till the trees begin, and one is back again in the comfortable range of humanity, with the sense of the old life of the world all about one, and the people who live their poetry instead of scribbling it down.”

“But I should be very sorry,” said my friend, “if it were not sometimes scribbled down! I like to think of old Wordsworth, with his rustic form and sturdy legs, his plain face gaining, as his companions testified, an inspired solemnity of aspect from the sight of the earth that he loved so well—all that grows out of it, all that lives upon it. The beauty of the earth and the beauty

of the human face—those are the only two kinds of beauty that we in England understand and express.”

By this time we were far on our way; but we halted once more, as we retraced our steps, on the brow of the hill, to watch the mist beginning to swim in faint veils and wreaths over the low-lying fields, under a green frosty sky, fringed with orange light; and farther yet the towers and spires of Cambridge rose softly out of the haze, the smoke drifting northwards in the breeze, without a sound except the sharp cry of some night-bird in the heart of the wood, and the rhythmical beat of horsehoofs, now loud now low, on the road that bore us back to the accustomed hearth, out of the twilight fields and the solitary hill.



## ST. GOVAN'S

THE little rough lane, with its decrepit hedges of turf and stones, ended suddenly in a broad sheet of grass, closely combed and elastic. Two hundred feet below lay the open Atlantic, its green waves riding majestically landward before the fresh wind. To left and right, over the high pastures, headland after headland ran out seaward. For miles on either hand the sheer grey cliffs dropped precipitously to the breakers, broken but twice or thrice by the inlet of creek or haven or sand-fringed bay, with here and there a toppling pinnacle of rock, cut off from the mainland, rising grimly out of the boiling surf.

The cliff-edge was but a few yards away, and seemed as abrupt here as elsewhere; but on drawing near, the head of a little ravine opened in the turf, with steep, rocky sides, the tufts of sea-thrift and shaggy grass clinging to ledge and cleft; in the sparse soil appeared the head of a rude staircase, made of little slabs of worn grey stone, deeply set. A few steps downwards, and there appeared, down below, the grey-slatted roof and rough belfry of a tiny chapel, hanging be-

tween sea and sky, half-embedded in the ground, and wedged between the steep rocks of the ravine from side to side, like a nest in a thicket. It looked strangely precarious there, with the wind volleying over it and the billows roaring beneath, as though a touch would have sent it bounding in ruins down the slope. A farther descent, with the crags closing in on either hand, brought one to the low-arched door; the whole place was incredibly rude and ancient, built of roughly-shaped limestone fragments. Indeed, the antiquaries say that the masonry is Roman, and that it was evidently a little fort to guard the landing-place, which a hermit had restored and adapted to more pious uses. The roof within, low-vaulted and roughly plastered; the floor nothing but oozy marl, red and miry, with the rain-water dripping in pools by window and door. A single square aperture, open to the air, looked seaward, and the wind thundered through. There was a rude stone altar, and a low stone seat on each side, running the whole length of the chapel; at the west a little door led out upon the steep seaward track; beside the altar, another little door led into a sort of cave in the limestone, half-open to the sky; this was all rude and unshaped, except for a rough, upright niche on the left just large enough to contain the body of a man of moderate stature. Tradition says, and there is no reason to doubt it, that this is a place of penance. It is strange indeed to think of the old anchorite,

with his wild hair and beard, crouching naked in this dreary cleft, hour by hour, with the wind howling in the gully, and the rain dripping through the crevices, quenching rebellious temptations, or expiating old light-hearted sins, and offering his pain with a willing heart to the pitiful Father of all living.

Yet it cannot have been a wholly lonely life. The place was visited of old by hundreds of pilgrims. A little farther down the steep seaward track is a well, rudely arched over with rugged masonry, the water of which was credited with healing virtues. Even fifty years ago, it is said, there were to be seen, thrust in among the boulders, crutches and splints and bandages, votive offerings from simple pilgrims who had reason to think themselves cured by the sacred waters. It is all a very bewildering and startling mystery, not, I think, to be lightly dismissed as a mass of unscientific tradition and gross superstition. And in any case, the scene of so much human emotion, such suffering, such hopes, such gratitude, must have a pathos of its own. Now the wind whistles in the cleft, and the thin cry of the floating gull comes mournfully up, while the breakers blanch on the rocks below. In summer come parties of holiday-making folk, who peer into the chapel, squeeze themselves laughing into the hermit's niche, sip the waters of the well, and feast pleasantly above the gently-lapping sea; and perhaps it is better so; though

one does not think that the hermit's penitential groans and the feverish prayers of the sufferers who dragged themselves so patiently down those rugged steps were utterly wasted. We still lament our faults, endure our pains, breathe our hopes, though we do it more tentatively, and, we claim, more reasonably to-day!

It is strange that nothing should be known of the hermit or the hermits that lived so hard a life between the sky and the sea. The name St. Govan does not even enshrine a sacred memory. It is nothing but a corruption of Sir Gawain, the nephew of King Arthur, and one of the most sin-stained and treacherous of the knights of the Round Table. It was said that he suffered shipwreck here, and that this great body was washed ashore, bruised and shattered; and that at the time of the Conquest his tomb was still to be seen on the hilltop, a huge pile of hewn stone.

But dim and strange as the human memories of the place are, the mind struggles backwards through the centuries, feeling its way helplessly across the tracts of time; how tiny a fringe, after all, of the real life of the place is the part that it has played in human history and tradition! I suppose that for thousands of years there has been hardly a change in the aspect of the scene. When Israel came out of Egypt, when the Greeks fought round about Troy, when Romulus walled his little upland fort among the clustered hills of Rome, the sun shone, and the wind blew, and the

rollers thundered in upon the gorse-clad promontory and the bleak cliff-precipices. The gulls and the sea-snails of the place have an ancestry that would put the pedigrees of kings and emperors to shame. The mystery of it all is that these creatures of the surf and the cliff have lived their blind lives, generation after generation, with the passions and emotions of the day and the hour; is it all for nothing that they have lived and died? What has become of the life and spirit which animated them? It must at least be as lasting as the stone of the crag and the boulder of the shore; and we know of no process which should create either or bring either to an end. And then at last comes man; and here the amazing thing is that he can send his thought backwards and forwards through the ages, can imagine the endless procession of lives, the generations of creatures that have dwelt here. At my feet there crops out a piece of limestone through the turf, close-set with the fossil fibres of some prehistoric madrepore, the sign of a life embalmed and recorded, so ancient that the mind can hardly wrestle with the thought. Yet it all means something in the vast mind of God. And here is the wonderful part, that to man alone is it given to set himself as it were by the side of the Creator, and survey the range and progress of the eternal work; and then the thought flies farther yet, to the stars that hang, unseen in the noonday light, over sea and shore, each star

with its planets, like our own, inhabited doubtless by other creatures, with lives like our own, intelligences, emotions, spirits, with what miracles, perhaps, of grace and redemption working themselves out for them, through the mercy and loving-kindness of the Father of all.

It is true that the mind cannot live or breathe or act at these altitudes; but for all that, there are days and hours when such thoughts are inevitable and inspiring too, even though it may bring home to us how brief and negligible a thing is the opening of the windows of our own soul upon the daylight of the world. It is an awful and overmastering thought, for it reveals the almost ghastly insignificance of the single life; yet it is inspiring too, for it reveals that, however small that life may be, it yet has a sure and certain place in the Father's thought; that His work was not complete without us, and that we are eternally and utterly in His care.

Such was the message of the cliff-top and the sea, so that the little chapel became a place of visions, full of light, and resounding to the far-off harmony of a heavenly music. Could one but keep that music undimmed and pure!

But the day begins to darken to its close; the old familiar tide of life sweeps up, and draws one back to work and love, to joy and pain—yet that awe-struck hope, that sense of far-off mystery is indeed an earnest of the heavenly vision. “When I awake up after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.”

## A RUINED HOUSE

I HAVE often wondered what can be the origin of the pleasure which human beings take in contemplating a ruined building. One would think that there must be something morbid in the delight of seeing the skeleton, so to speak, of an ancient house or church, built for pleasure or piety, a thing that stands for so much vanished life, and faded pride, and vain expense; the broken abode of so many hopes and affections and joys, to say nothing of fears and sorrows. And I suppose that the charm partly lies there—the charm of “old unhappy far-off things,” the sense of the joyfulness of life, its brave designs, its rich expectations; and then the brevity of it all, its unutterable pathos, its lavish suffering, and the dark mystery of its close. That is what people of experience and imagination find in the sight of an ancient ruin; and yet when the summer sun falls on ivied gable and mouldering arch, there comes a sense of tranquillity and content, as though death could not, after all, be really a shadow upon Nature, or a sundering flood, when decay itself can be so beautiful.

I imagine that the whole emotion is a very modern one, hardly more than a century old. The strange thing is that the mediæval builders, whose ruined towers and choirs we go far to see, had no trace of such a feeling. They frankly preferred the new to the old. They thought nothing of putting a new and gorgeous front on an old and simple church, and they were always, it seems, glad to pull anything down, if they could replace it by a smarter substitute. As for a ruin, it was simply a useless and uninteresting heap of stones, a convenient quarry, a place of perquisites. And then, too, we must remember that from the time of the Restoration, till Horace Walpole and Gray came on the scene, a Gothic building was considered a hideous and barbarous affair, to be replaced, if possible, by a neat classical edifice, and if not, to be endured in silence. No, the whole sentiment for what is old and ruinous is a modern one, and I think a tender one, good for heart and mind; though it argues perhaps a want of manly confidence in our own performances and improvements; and is partly responsible for the fact that we cannot . . . find a style of our own in architecture, but are always trying combinations and reconstructions instead of striking out a new line.

And then, too, for the present generation, a ruin is so often connected with happy holiday times, an expedition and a picnic; it stands for plenty of adventure and laughter and good



humour and unusual food and pleasant relaxation of normal discipline. I recall the summer jaunts of my childhood, and try to disentangle what the charm of it all was. It certainly was not in the least connected with any sense of what was picturesque, nor had the imagination anything to do with it. I never attempted as a child to reconstruct any picture of the old life of the place, the armoured knights, the embowered ladies, the rough merriment of the guard-room or hall. I fancy that the pleasure was scrambling on broken stairs, looking over dizzy parapets, and peeping into dark vaults, combined with a very constant hope that one might stumble on some sort of buried treasure, a hoard of coins in an earthen vase, or a ring encircling a mouldering finger bone. Such things had happened, and why not to me? I was not at all of the opinion of Matthew Arnold's eight-year-old son, who was taken, it is recorded in his father's letters, to a picnic at Furness Abbey. Budge was the child's sobriquet. When the living freight of the carriage had emptied itself into the ruins, there were exclamations on every side, such as might fall from the members of a highly cultivated circle, at the romantic charm of the place. The wise Budge waited till the tempest of æsthetic delight had spent itself, and then uplifted a clear childish treble, "What a nasty, *bestly* place!" That unsophisticated opinion, that dispassionate judgment, is what I believe

the natural mind, complicated by no false sentiment, no cultured association, ought undoubtedly to feel at so melancholy, so wasteful, so disorderly a sight as a great building falling into decay.

And yet, from whatever intricate source it may arise, that is not at all the thought of the mature mind. I have been spending some days in Pembrokeshire, that marvellous bleak, wind-swept land, with its winding sea-creeks, its fantastic cliffs, its rocky islets. There is a paradise of romantic buildings! Valley after valley has its bastioned feudal fortress—Llawhaden, Carew, Manorbier—the very names have a thrill! Hamlet after hamlet has an ivy-clad, stone-vaulted stronghold, and one can hardly conceive what conditions of life should have produced such a proximity of stately, guarded dwellings. On hill after hill there stands some low-arched, thick-walled church, with a great loop-holed tower, corbelled and machicolated, the high walls inclining gently towards the top—"battering" is the technical term—which gives them a marvellous grace of outline.

Here on a still winter afternoon, with a pale gleam of sun, we came suddenly on a place, Lamphey by name, of which I had not so much as heard, which seems to me one of the most incredibly beautiful things I have ever had the delight of seeing. It was one of the seven great houses of the Bishops of St. David's, but it was

alienated from the see to Henry VIII. by Bishop Barlow, who seems to have been one of the most unsatisfactory prelates who ever bore rule in the Church. He married the prioress of a disbanded nunnery, Agatha Wellsburn by name, and his five daughters all married bishops! I shrink from recording the character of the bishop himself, as sketched by a near relative. He dismantled the palace at St. David's, and sold the lead of the roof; Lamphey he parted with to the king, in favour of a godson of his own, a Devereux, who was the founder of the house of Essex; in fact, the ill-fated Earl, the favourite and victim of Elizabeth, spent his happy youth in these towers.

Down in a pleasant valley lies the great ruined house, by the side of a rapid, full-fed stream that runs through wooded hills, by sedge-fringed pastures and copse-clad dingles. The air is soft and sweet. Big palms grow in the open air by the ruined walls, and the ivy sprawls over the parapets with marvellous luxuriance. The pleasure is now a high-walled garden, in the centre of which stands a tower of exquisite proportions, with a charming arched loggia at the top, a favourite design of Bishop Gower, the fourteenth-century Bishop of St. David's, who left this beautiful feature of his art in most of the palaces of the see. The building, which is wonderfully complete, stretches away beside the stream in two vast blocks of masonry, of all sorts of dates and

designs, with its towers and bastions and gables and buttresses, all wreathed in ivy, with a great profusion of ferns and creeping plants, the cattle stalled in its vaults, the garden implements stored in its stately chambers. Here, in its green solitude, with the stream swirling at its foot and the wind whispering in the thickets, it crumbles slowly to decay.

Well, it served its turn, no doubt, the great house of Lamphey! One cannot help wondering at the strange fortune that surrounded these servants of Christ, these successors of the Galilean fishermen, with all this secular splendour, this feudal pomp and power! A Bishop of St. David's, with his retinue of knights and his seven castles, can have had but little leisure for apostolical duties. But it was a reward, no doubt, for all that the Church had done to Christianise and civilise this rude corner of the world; and it was just because the Church yielded to the temptations of aggrandisement, of influence, of wealth, that the fall and the spoliation followed. God or Mammon? The choice was clear, the warning was plain. As one looked at the great pile, so noble even in its humiliation, it was hard not to regret the vivid life, the stately splendour of what had been. Yet the broken tower and the ruined wall had their message too—that not by might or power are God's victories won.

## ST. ANTHONY-IN-THE-FELLS

Nor long ago I visited an extremely curious and interesting church in the north of England. Its official title is Cartmel Fell; but the church is known in the neighbourhood by the more romantic title of St. Anthony-in-the-Fells. It stands not far from Kendal, in a wide valley sloping to the sea; a pastoral place, full of rich grass meadows and woodland, and with old picturesque farm-houses—mullioned, stone-slatted, rough-cast buildings, with round chimney-stacks and wooden galleries—in the midst of no less venerable and picturesque outbuildings. On one side of the valley runs a great limestone bluff, with its pale terraces and screes; on the other, miniature crags and heathery uplands.

The church itself is beautifully placed, just where the low-lying copses and pastures break into the open fell. The fields slope in all directions, and are full of little ridges and outcrops of rock, fringed with tiny thickets. Here and there, in a green dingle, a spring soaks out among rushes, so that the air is musical with the sound of dropping waters. The building it-

self is low, half-sunk in the ground, and covered with weather-stained rough-cast. The tower windows are fitted with great rough slanting slates. The church has not beauty of form or design, but it looks like a living thing which has grown up almost naturally out of the soil and site. From porch to transept runs a low bench of slate, a seat for gossips on a summer Sabbath morning, for shepherds to sit "simply chatting in a rustic row." Inside it is the quaintest place imaginable. In the big, many-mullioned east window, there is a congeries of old stained glass of the fourteenth century, which seems to have been roughly handled, and pieced together without much reference to design. Here and there is a patch of gorgeous colour, rich red or azure, a crucifixion, a mitred saint or two, St. Leonard with his chain, and St. Anthony with a sportive porker hunched up at the butt-end of his crozier. There is a scene which seems to be a confirmation, and all sorts of quaint fragments, such as an altar draped and vested, with holy vessels set out upon it, with square linen cards upon the chalices. I noticed in the vestry a heap of broken bits of glass of the same design, of finials and tabernacle-work, rude but spirited. The church is paved with irregular slabs of stone, all sloping slightly downward from the west, following the dip of the hill. A rudely-painted decalogue hangs on the eastern wall. But the strangest feature of the church is its pews, of all shapes and sizes, from huge

deal erections like loose boxes, to little gnarled oaken desks with plain finials. Then, in order to complete its unlikeness to any other place, on one side of the church, near the east, is a real state Jacobean pew, with panelled canopy and pilasters; while on the other side stands what must have been a screened chantry, finely-carved, and with rich touches of colour lying on moulding and panel, the heads of the saints depicted having evidently been carefully deleted with some sharp-pointed instrument, in an ecstasy of Protestant devotion.

There stands the little place, a real historic document from first to last, quaint, interesting, curious, and beautiful with that kind of beauty which can only come through age and association. Of course it will have to be restored, and very shortly too—that is the difficulty! On the one hand there is the pity of destroying so strange an accretion; yet, on the other hand, it cannot be called a seemly sanctuary. What is wanted is the most delicate sort of restoration, trying to keep everything interesting and characteristic, and yet making the place warm and homelike and solemn. What of course is to be feared is that enthusiastic subscribers and an ambitious architect will want to make a “good job” of it, which will end by making it just like any other church; for that is the sad thing about our English churches—I have visited a great many of late—that though special features and interest-

ing details are often carefully preserved, many churches have been practically rebuilt; and people do not seem to realise that a new church, however closely imitated from an old one, has only the interest of a copy, and is a skilful forgery at best; while it has lost all the subtle beauty of age, the half-tones, the irregularities, the dented surfaces, the tiny settlements, the weather-stains, which make the old building so harmonious and delicate a thing, even though the original design was of the simplest and plainest.

It is very difficult to adjust the various claims. There is the perfectly natural and laudable design to make a church a credit to the village; to make it an effective and comfortable building; to make it represent a definite ecclesiastical tradition. The last is perhaps the most perilous, because the tradition is not a natural and progressive tradition, but a revived mediævalism, and not a living development; yet after all, when all is said, I supposed that the instinct to sweep away, as debasing and offensive, all hint of what is Georgian, and even Jacobean, out of churches, means something, and is in its way historical, or on its way to become so. But meanwhile, like the gratitude of men, it leaves the philosopher mourning.

Possibly the right principles to keep in view in restoring a church are these. Everything which is solid, costly, and of good workmanship ought to be retained, even if it does not harmonise



with our present taste, whether it be monument, window, or church furniture. The most that ought to be permitted should be to move an object which is inharmonious, or supposed to be so, from a conspicuous to a less conspicuous position. But even if the workmanship is inferior, or if the object, whatever it be, is generally condemned, then it ought in any case to be carefully stored, to await a possible revolution of taste.

Early in the last century, when Skipton Church was restored, its splendid Tudor screen was condemned as barbarous and inconvenient. An old relative of my own, resident in the town, begged for the materials. They were gladly handed over to him. He stored them in boxes in a warehouse. Many years later, when the ecclesiastical revival had taken place, and the church was once more renovated, there were loud lamentations on the loss of the screen. He produced it with modest triumph, and it was joyfully resuscitated. But what a lesson to zealous church-restorers, who say confidently and with no sort of misgivings, "Of course *that* frightful object must go!"

## ANTIQUITIES AND AMENITIES

I HAD been travelling in Northumberland, and I had spent a glorious morning, with a bright sun and a cold wind, on the Roman Wall. It is, indeed, a thing to stir the imagination. It runs over hill and dale by crag and moor, for sixty miles, from sea to sea. It is a double line of fortification, a huge stone wall to the north, and a great earth-work to the south. Inside the lines, the strip varies much in breadth. Every three miles lies a large fortified camp, with towers and guard-rooms, prætorium and barracks. At every mile is a smaller fort, with guard-towers every three hundred yards. Many of these are gone, having been used to build farms and walls and to make roads. But many of them exist and have been excavated. In fact the whole place was one vast camp, sixty miles long and a few hundred yards broad; no one knows who built it. It may have been Hadrian, it may have been Severus. It has been sacked at least once, and repaired again; it was meant, no doubt, to keep off the warlike and ruthless Picts, and to make the south safe from their forays.

I had spent the morning at Borcovicus, a great camp on the very bleakest and barest part of the moors. It has all been excavated, and one can see the colonnade where the daily orders were read, the great gateways, with the pivot-holes of the gates, the guard-rooms, warmed in some cases by hot air, the elaborate arrangements for getting water, and for the disposal of sewage. The custodian had just disinterred a fine bit of sculpture, the bare feet of a Neptune, one resting on a dolphin's back.

The whole place gave one the sense of a busy and urgent life, lived at high pressure, and with a stern purpose. The walls are of massive quarried stone, and the labour which must have been involved in quarrying and carving blocks and columns and cornices, and dragging them for miles over the moor, gives the idea of a tremendous command of human energies. But what a dreary life it must have been for Roman soldiers pent up in this high hill-station! One wonders what they could have done with themselves.

There is, indeed, at Borcovicus, outside the wall, a theatre hollowed in the turf, with a special gate to reach it; and I daresay the place has seen some foul brutalities. There were, no doubt, skirmishes from time to time. There was hunting in the wild thicket-clad ravines for the adventurous—the tusks of wild boars are often found in the ruins—but it must have been a very

unpleasant life! The elaborate arrangements for warming the houses show how much the Romans must have dreaded the cold up there in the snow-clad winter.

We went on to Chesters, where there is a museum of curiosities found in the excavations. There are a few beautiful things of bronze and enamel, evidently brought from Rome. But the native products are rude enough—altars, tombs, sacred sculptures. Even here, there is a touch of human joy and sorrow which makes itself felt across the centuries. There is a votive altar to Silvanus, set up by “the huntsmen of Banna,” there is an affectionate inscription to a young freedman, a Moor, who died at the age of twenty, and his graceful figure is depicted reclining above the inscription, which says that his former master, Numerianus, followed him with grief to the tomb. There is an elaborate monument to the British wife of a young officer, who lavished loving care on her monument, himself a native of Palmyra. And then there are all the signs of life and activity—arrowheads, swords, spears, a curious leather shoe, with elaborate straps, all the debris of the daily round. Through the intense interest of the whole there falls a mournful shadow, the shadow of vanished human endeavour, the old terror of war and violence. It was with a strange sense of pathos and wonder that I turned away. The river ran sparkling among its shingle, the woods rustled in the cool breeze; and over

the hill, to left and right, one could see the deep lines of the vallum and the broken base of the wall, with the thorn-trees rooting in it, all so peaceful now, in the track of ancient wars, fought out fifteen centuries ago.

And then, in order that my day might not be *too* happy, too sweet to be wholesome, Fate dropped the least drop of bitter in the cup, a dash of incivility; there is no more tonic drug than that, because it teaches a man that he must depend solely on his ingratiating merits for favour, and cannot win it by the coat he wears—though it is true that my coat is not a very impressive one—or by the money he can jingle in his pocket. These Northumbrians, too, are so extraordinarily kindly and courteous, in a dignified way, that they spoil one. As a rule they talk to one graciously and smilingly, as if half honoured, half amused by the *rencontre*, with that pleasant broken burr, in the softest of voices, with a peculiar silky texture which caresses the ear; there is no servility of deference, but an equal and good-humoured courtesy, as between friends and brothers.

Now, however, it was very different; just as I passed the stone gate-posts of a grange, I saw a shepherd driving his flock out of a field hard by. My way lay to the village of Four Stones, across the hill. Just where I saw the shepherd, there was an uncompromising road which went solidly over the bluff. But on the map was

marked a pleasant grass track a little farther on. Now, I have always regarded a shepherd as a lesser kind of angel. When I have talked to them before, they have spoken in kind, high voices, as of men who have struggled with winds on weary mountain-heads, and they have had a remote and secluded look, as of men who have not much commerce with their fellows. But they have always seemed to me men of patience and gentleness—and indeed if the care of a flock of hill-sheep does not give a man a chance of becoming both, there is no discipline that will!

But this shepherd was a pale, shrewish-looking man, alert and aggressive, with bushy whiskers and eyebrows, and, what disconcerted me most, a strange resemblance to Mr. Ruskin about him, which gave me that odd feeling of knowing the man and being familiar with his thought.

I said to him, "Is there a footpath a little farther on over the hill, to Four Stones?"

He looked at me from head to foot with a quick, bustling air, as if he thought it impertinent of me to ask him a question, and made no reply. I repeated my inquiry.

"I hear ye," he said.

I was vexed by this, and repeated my question again.

"This is the road to Four Stones," he said.

"Yes," I said, "I know that. Here is the sign-post! What I want to know is whether

there is a footpath farther on. There is one marked on the map."

"I don't know nothing about your map," he said, wrinkling up his eyebrows.

"Yes, but is there a footpath over the hill?" I said.

"I'm thinking there 'll be none," he said.

"Yes, but do you *know* there is none?" I said.

"I tell ye I know there is none," he said, raising his voice angrily.

"Well," I said, "I think you might have said so before; and I will tell *you* something, and that is that you are the first man I have found in Northumberland who is rude to strangers."

He gave me an ugly look, and I think he would have liked to hit at me with his stick if he had dared. I went off along the road, having shot my bolt. A man does not like being told in his own country that he is rude to strangers. Even the Carinthian boor, who we know shuts his door on a houseless stranger, would be accessible to such a taunt. A long way up the road I turned and looked back, and he was still standing where I had left him, looking evilly after me. The man was a Pict, no doubt, and it was in his blood to resent intrusion. I dare say his ancestors had had brushes fifteen centuries ago with well-fed Roman soldiers; and he did not like strangers who asked questions about the locality; he felt that they meant mischief, and, I daresay, thanked God that he was rid of a knave.

But fortune was on my side, and was determined, evidently, to vindicate Northumbrian courtesy. As I came down into the village of Four Stones, a dreary hamlet on the bank of the Tyne, with a tall-chimneyed factory and heaps of scorïæ, I asked a little eager man, with a small white beard, the way to the station.

"It's hard by here," he said breathlessly, "I will walk with you and show it you." We walked together and discoursed of the weather. "Yes," he said, "we want rain; the river is low, and the lands are burnt up; but we may be thankful that it is better here than in the south." I told him that I came from the south, and that the pastures were all burnt brown. "Indeed?" he said, with much concern, "Yes, it's been a hard summer down south, no doubt." By this time we were close to the station, and he pointed it out to me. I asked if there was a train soon to Gilsland. "Indeed, there is," he said, and whipped out a watch, "in thirty-two minutes, precisely." "Can I walk along the river," I said, "till the train comes in?" "Yes," he said, "by all means; it's a nice walk. I'll show you how to get there. I'll walk with you and put you in your way." He whisked round, and led me to a level-crossing. "You may go through here," he said. "You have twenty-nine minutes"—he plucked out his watch. "Now, mind," he said, with an uplifted forefinger, "the express runs through first—don't you be alarmed if you



see it. Your train—that's the slow one—runs in eight minutes behind—a pleasant walk to you!"

This energetic and friendly man set me right with the world. I felt welcomed, introduced to the country, made free of its pleasant places. There was no Pictish blood in my white-bearded friend! When I came back to the level-crossing, he was waiting for me. "Have you enjoyed your walk?" he said; "that's right—and now to the station! The express will just be coming through. Have a care of it as you cross the line."

## 'ADDINGTON

How well I remember, on a hot September evening nearly thirty years ago, how the carriage in which four travellers were driving—all of them weary and one of them considerably awed—passed in at a lodge-gate, leaving suburban villas and rows of brick-built villas behind, into the cool, pine-scented gloom of a great park. What a domain it seemed! We passed between heathery hills, among high thickets of rhododendrons, by a lake, and then out into a spacious expanse of grass with clumps of oaks and beeches, and saw below us the long façade of a huge stone-built house with a stately air of spacious dignity about it. That was my first sight of Addington.

Moreover, I had the quite inexplicable conviction, which darted in my mind as we drove, that we should come to live there. How soon and how unexpectedly that conviction was fulfilled!

The party consisted of my father and mother, my elder sister and myself. Archbishop Tait was lying ill; but he had rallied so often from more serious illnesses, that few even of those about him realised that he was dying. He had ex-

pressed a wish to see my father, and he had in his mind a belief that my father would then, or ultimately, succeed him. "I am worn out," he had written about that time, adding: "the Bishop of Truro will come forward and do a great work."

On that occasion I never saw him, though he sent me and my sister an affectionate message. We stayed there several days; the present Archbishop was then acting as chaplain. It was a quiet family party, and we were all made entirely at home.

The house had been bought for the See at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and Manners-Sutton was the first Archbishop who lived there. He, together with Howley, Sumner, Longley, and Tait, were all buried in the churchyard, and the present Archbishop has just put up a beautiful monument to their memory there. There was an old archiepiscopal palace at Croydon, which still exists, with Laud's woodwork in the chapel, now, I believe, an Anglican convent. But it was an inconvenient house, on low-lying and damp ground, and even then Croydon was beginning to spread round about it. Addington was built by a Lord Mayor, Trecothick by name. It had been a royal manor, held by some quaint tenure of an annual present to the Sovereign of a dish of sweet almond paste! The house was largely added to when Archbishop Manners-Sutton went to live there. The ground falls so rapidly that one drives up in front of

what is practically the first floor. It has no great architectural merit, but it is a stately and comfortable house with many large rooms, and one of the most noble cedars on the lawn that I have ever seen.

The old Croydon archiepiscopal estate passed eventually into the hands of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, and has become immensely valuable; the unearned increment does not go to the Archbishop, but into the common fund of the Commission. That seems an equitable enough arrangement where a merely ecclesiastical personage is concerned!

I cannot honestly say that it ever seemed to me a very appropriate house for an Archbishop. It was convenient enough, being only thirteen miles from Lambeth, but its great woods, full of winding drives laid out by Howley, its enormous stables and gardens, the beautiful and various scenery of the park, are all too much in the style of the *grand seigneur*. The life lived there by the first Archbishops was quiet enough. Archbishop Howley's daily letters just covered the bottom of a china bowl which stood in the hall; Archbishop Sumner used to make charming water-colour drawings of trees in the park. My father became deeply devoted to the place; but he had, whence derived I know not, all the instincts of a territorial magnate, and some of his happiest days were spent in strolling about the woods with the bailiff, settling which trees were to be

cut down. But my father did not enjoy it selfishly; he continued the hospitable custom of the Taits, and issued a large number of tickets of admission to the park to neighbours and residents, besides giving free leave to parties to picnic there. But it used to vex him sorely to find how visitors used to leave paper about, carry away masses of flowers, and even dig up ferns and daffodils for their own gardens. I remember how once he heard an unusual noise in the garden outside his library, and on going to the window, found a huge picnic party who had invaded the private garden, were laying their lunch on the lawn, and looking in at the ground-floor windows!

There was a chapel there which my father beautified with woodwork and frescoes, and in which he took great delight. Indeed, so much attached did he become to the place, and so important did he consider its mixture of seclusion and convenience, that I have heard him arguing the case for its retention, and convincing himself by his own eloquence of its advantages, to such an extent that he came to the triumphant conclusion that if either Lambeth or Addington must be given up, it must be Lambeth rather than Addington.

Archbishop Temple, however, came to the opposite conclusion. The house was sold, as soon as he succeeded, for a very inadequate price, to a Mr. English, who enlarged and greatly beautified the house; and owing to his decease it is again

in the market. It will doubtless ultimately be divided and cut up for building land.

I do not think that, much as he loved Addington, my father was ever very well there. His temperament demanded activity rather than repose. At Addington, though his work was terribly heavy, he used to write a little at his beloved *Cyprian*, and he greatly enjoyed riding over the quiet country which stretched away to the south. But my impression of him at Addington is that he was more often than not depressed and anxious. Away from the stir of the London life, and with more leisure to think, he used to feel the stress of the great problems with which he was confronted, and his own fancied inadequacy to deal with them. Yet the house is inseparably connected with him in my memories. I can see him with his cloak and soft hat, pacing up and down on a sunny, frosty morning in the garden terrace, looking up at the great cedars which he loved. I can see him dressed for riding, feeding the horses with bread and sugar at the door, or strolling on Sunday with his canvas bag of broken crusts for the swans on the pool, and a *Christian Year* in his hand, which he would read aloud to the party, sitting on a heathery bank in the wood. Most clearly of all, I can see him in his purple cassock after evening chapel, sitting down to write endless letters till one or two in the morning, looking up with a smile as we came to say good-night, twitching the glasses

off his nose to enjoy a few minutes of leisurely talk. But for all that it is not to me, as I say, a place of very happy memories, because my father's spirits tended to be low there; and I never knew any one whose moods, however carefully he guarded them, so affected the spirits of the circle by which he was surrounded.

He was very hospitable, and there was a constant stream of visitors there, from high officials of Church and State to relations and family friends. There used to be dinner-parties of pleasant neighbours, children's theatricals, tobogganing-parties, and all the stir of a big country house. But I never somehow felt it to be very real; we were simple professional people, and there seemed an artificial air of state about it all. But I do not think my father ever felt that; he had a natural princeliness both of mind and manner, and Addington seemed a fit setting for his perfectly unaffected greatness. He took a great interest in the people on the estate, and his Christmas Day sermons, when he reviewed the joys and sorrows of the village for the past year, used to have an extraordinarily affecting quality of simple and homely emotion.

The new palace at Canterbury, built under the auspices of Archbishop Temple, is a singular contrast to Addington. It is an ingenious adaptation of an old house, with some additions; but it is shut in by buildings, close under the Cathedral; it has no stables, and a tiny garden. My father

used to maintain that the Archbishop was better away from Canterbury, and indeed, even on his own accession to the See, I believe he actually paid a customary fee to make himself free of the place—the fact being that in old times the entertainment of an Archbishop with his suite at Canterbury was so serious an affair, from the expense entailed, that matters had to be financially accommodated!

Archbishop Temple behaved, I remember, with extraordinary generosity, when my father died. He took over the whole contents of Addington by valuation, as we had done, though he was not legally bound to do so, and had no thought except to make things easier for us. The transference of the See-house to Canterbury was warmly welcomed by the city and the diocese, and it no doubt has some advantages, though it necessitates the Archbishop having to pass from one official life to another, instead of giving him some much-needed quiet and seclusion after the ceaseless engagements of the London life.

But the giving up of Addington is symbolical of more than that. In my father's time it was simply a survival of a state of affairs which could not have continued. It marks the alteration from the position of the Archbishop, who was in the days of Manners-Sutton a great official of State, with few duties and responsibilities, for whom the setting of a great country house among



woods and gardens was a perfectly natural appanage, to the position which he now holds, of the superintendence of enormous interests and activities, combining with the duties of a huge department of religious and social life.

My father's unbounded interest and vitality, the way in which he threw himself into the smallest details of his life, made it just possible for him to continue the two positions. But the old order has here rightly given place to the new, and it cannot be restored. We may regret the loss of picturesqueness, even of dignity; but a Bishop is no longer a territorial magnate; his income can no longer be used simply in keeping up feudal state. He needs it, if he needs it, for hospitality, and to give him the power of initiating and supporting religious enterprises, and not for mere magnificence. His dignity must be the dignity which is earned by sympathy, and efficiency, and commanding qualities of wisdom and high-mindedness, and can no longer be the mere reflection of mediæval state and lordliness.

## BRENT KNOLL

It was on a fine, fresh January morning that we raced merrily over the wide, alluvial plain of Somersetshire, once a vast salt-marsh, to the great green, high-standing bulk of Brent Knoll. It was a very familiar object to me in my school-days, the knoll, as I went and returned to Eton or to Truro by the Great Western Railway. I used to look out for it with pleasant curiosity. Seen from the line it consisted of a high, round head, with the line of ancient earthworks at the top plainly visible, and below that a steep plateau, with an almost geometrically flat summit, the side of it intersected by narrow, parallel hedged fields and orchards, running up from the straggling village at the base. To-day we came to it from the north, and halted first at East Brent, where there is a big, perpendicular church with a fine spire and a large rectory hard by, whence for many years Archdeacon Denison issued his ecclesiastical lightnings. I remember the little, fiery, humorous man well. He was a brother of the Speaker Denison, the moving spirit of the *Speaker's Commentary*. I saw the Archdeacon at

a Congress, delivering one of his shrill diatribes, a jaunty little figure, looking as though he were made of some irrepressible india-rubber, with active gaitered legs, a very short apron, and the air of a militant cock-sparrow. His speech was a lively one, full of good-tempered animosity and preposterous exaggeration. His denunciations were listened to with affectionate amusement, while he threatened the impenitent world with disaster and decadence, a sort of clerical Boythorn.

The church itself is a fine one, with a quaint Jacobean gallery, the walls much disfigured by crumbling modern sentimental frescoes. The only thing I regretted was that a charming old brazen sconce lay neglected in a gallery pew. Then we sped round to the village of Brent Knoll, and there, in a delicious combe with hanging woods, we ate our sandwiches by a hedgerow filled with hart's-tongue fern, while a sociable robin hopped round us and loudly claimed his share of the meal. His wish was gratified; but fate came upon him in the form of a gaunt black hen, who burst through a gate, and charged stamping down, to take her share of the plunder.

We strolled up to the other church hard by, restored out of all interest, with the exception of a charming Caroline monument, carved and painted, in three panels. In the centre is a jolly, complacent cavalier, with slashed and ruffled sleeves of dainty blue and white, and a fine red gold-fringed sword-sash; below are displayed an

ensign and a drum; on either side of him are his two buxom and plump wives; one blue-eyed and smiling, with a great flapping hat; the other more demure, in a delicate brown kirtle. Here, too, I mourned to see a splendid bit of Jacobean iron-work, which must once have sustained a big chandelier, stored uselessly in the vestry. Who can fathom the mysteries of ecclesiastical purism?

This done, we addressed ourselves to the ascent. In half an hour we were standing in the tumbled grassy earthworks of the camp at the top. These great bastioned British forts are rather a mystery. They can never have been inhabited, as there is no possibility of obtaining water, except by dragging it up the hillside—unless the rain-water was stored in a pool. They must only have been used as camps of refuge in times of danger, for the safety of women and children and other live-stock—and what dreary, filthy places they must have been!

The view was stupendous; to the west were the shadowy Quantocks, with a great tidal river broadening to the sea. The hills of Wales were dim in the haze beyond the Channel, and there were several big steamers rolling and dipping out to the open sea. To the south rose the Mendips, beyond the great green flat; to the north, Weston-super-Mare lay out on the hillside, with its long lines of trim villas, and the grey-green ridge of the Bleadon Hills. In the calm afternoon we could hear the crowing of cocks far

below, and the horns of motors racing along the Bridgwater road.

It is good for the body to climb the steep slopes and breathe the pure air; it is good for the mind to see the map of England thus fairly unrolled before the eye; and it is good for the soul, too, to see the world lie extended at one's feet. How difficult it is to analyse the vague and poignant emotions which then and thus arise! There is first a sense of history; one thinks of our rude and brutish forefathers, skulking like conies into their hill-burrows at the sight of the column of Roman legionaries, with clanking horses and glittering spears. One has a sense, too, of how the world was subdued and replenished, and how the great salt-marsh by slow degrees became the rich pasture with all its dykes and homesteads. And then there comes, too, a sense of the continuity and solidarity of life. One thinks of the slow tide of humanity ebbing and flowing in the great fields, and setting homewards to the village street, with its smoke going up in the still air. What do all these little restless lives mean, so closely knit to each other and to oneself, and all so sharply separate? One thinks, too, of the romance of it all; the boy and girl playmates of the village green, the lovers wandering on June evenings among the thickets in the steep combe; then the lives of slow labour and domestic care, the generation renewing itself; and then the chair in the

sunny cottage garden, and last of all the churchyard and the tolling bell. One thinks, too, of the old sailor, reared, perhaps, long ago in the village at one's feet, as he plies up and down the Channel, sees the breezy top of the knoll, and remembers the boyish rambles in the old careless days at home. No one can, I think, avoid such thoughts as these, and though one cannot dwell on them for long, yet it is good to let them dart thus into the mind, as one sits on the grassy bastion, with the wind rustling past, and the windows of far-off farms glittering in the haze of the wide plain.

But the day began to decline, and we made our way, in a smiling silence, down the steep paths; how soon we were at the head of the village street, among clustered orchards and deep-littered byres; and the sun began to set as we came to East Brent; the mist rose up in airy wefts among the elms; the black shadow of the knoll crept swiftly out across the plain; and soon we were flying homewards in the dusk, with a low orange sunset glaring and smouldering in the west, by quiet lanes, with tall, high-chimneyed farms standing up among bare elms, the cattle loitering home in the muddy track, and great white fowls going solemnly up one by one into the boarded roost.

What a glad thing life would be if it were but made up of such days, and if it could last thus! It seemed terrible out there in the quiet dusk to think of the men and women immured in

crowded cities and in little slovenly rooms. But even so, one knew that it was life that one desired, life and work and companionship. These vague reveries, so full of sunset light and slumberous sound—the wind in the orchard boughs, the trickle of the stream through the grass-grown sluice—are sweet enough, but unsubstantial too. They can be but an interlude in business and care and daily labour. One would not, if one could, fly like Ariel on the bat's back and swing in the trailing flower. How one would crave for the stir, the language, the very scent and heat of life! But it is good, for all that, to get away at times above and beyond it all, as in an island above the rushing tide; to feel for a moment that we are larger than we know, and that the goal of our pilgrimage is not in sight. To live in the past and in the future; to perceive that there is a deep and gracious design in and beyond these mysteries of light and colour, of sound and silence. It is thus, I think, that we press for an instant close to the heart of the world, catch a glimpse of the deepest secret of life, the symbols of eternity, and even of the glory that shall be revealed to us, if we are patient and hopeful and wise.

That was what the green head of Brent Knoll said to me this day, rising steeply among its rough pastures and leafless thickets, with the pale and wintry sunshine over all, and the smoke drifting up into the stillness from the clustered village at its feet.

## MR. GLADSTONE

ENOUGH has been said and written about Mr. Gladstone's political position and ecclesiastical views! I shall not attempt to touch upon either, but I should like to draw, so to speak, a rough sketch of my impression of his personality. I met him a good many times, and saw him under rather exceptional circumstances; and I formed a very definite impression of him. It may be a wrong impression; it may be that I only saw him, as it were, in certain attitudes; but it is a definite point of view, and may not be without interest.

My first sight of him was when I was an Eton boy; it was the custom for persons of eminence, instead of taking their places in chapel with the congregation, to walk in at the end of the procession with the Provost. The rule was for the boys to remain seated until the entrance of the dignitaries, and then to rise to their feet. When Provost Goodford made his appearance—he was himself a picturesque figure, a small man, with a halting walk, in a voluminous surplice, with very high collars, such as were afterwards asso-



ciated with Mr. Gladstone himself, and a great "choker" tied in a large irregular bow—side by side with him came a sturdy figure in a grey summer frock-coat, and carrying a white hat, with a rose in his button-hole. The Provost motioned to him to go up the steps leading to the stalls, and with a low bow, Mr. Gladstone—I recognised him at once—complied. I sat close beneath him, and could not take my eyes off him. I remember his pallor, the dark glitter of his eyes, and, above all, the extreme reverence he displayed throughout the service. That impression is as distinct to me as on the day I received it, thirty-seven years ago.

In later days I met him at Eton and at Lambeth, at parties and privately. I spent a Sunday at Hawarden about 1887, and had a long talk with him while walking in the park. The late Lord Acton was staying in the house, and I was present at a discussion which took place between the two great men on some minute historical point. Mr. Gladstone, it seemed to me at the time, knew all about the subject that had been known, but Lord Acton appeared to know all that could ever be known, and the deference which the politician paid to the historian was very impressive.

The one characteristic which dominated all others was the sense Mr. Gladstone gave of enormous vitality and equable strength. His rather clumsily built, sturdy frame, his massive features,

his large eyes, with that tremendous glance full of fire and command, produced a sense of awe, almost of terror. His voice was unlike anything I ever heard, like the voice of many waters. It seemed to have an indefinite reserve of strength and thunder in it, and in talk it was like the ripple of a great river. One felt that if he raised it to its full extent, it might carry everything away. I remember hearing him in church say the responses to the Commandments with a variety of intonation, and an intensity of earnestness that made it unconsciously impressive as a rhetorical display. And then, combined with all this, was the noblest and sweetest courtesy that can be imagined. He gave his whole attention, and his profoundest respect, to any one with whom he found himself. The result was a kind of stupefying magnetism. That a man of such note, such august force, should condescend to be so much interested and pleased in the humblest auditor seemed incredible, and yet patently true. I recollect how once at a large dinner-party at Lambeth, when the guests were going away, Mr. Gladstone, who I did not suppose knew me by sight, crossed the room to shake hands with me, and to say in a kind of leonine whisper, "*Floreat Etona!*"

The result of all this was that his most trivial remarks seemed to be the result of mature reflection, and to carry with them a sort of passionate conviction. I remember a trifling instance

of this. We were sitting at tea on the Sunday afternoon at Hawarden in the open air. Mr. Gladstone was reading at intervals with profound attention in a little book, bound in blue cloth, which I can only describe as having been in appearance of the Sunday-school type. Occasionally he closed the book, and joined in the talk. Something was said about the right use of abbreviations in printed books, when Mr. Gladstone intervened, and said with passionate emphasis that by far the most important contribution to the practical welfare of the world he had ever made was the invention of two financial symbols to express respectively a thousand and a million. As far as I can recollect, the symbol for a thousand was the letter M, for a million the letter M surrounded by a circle. After a pause he added in a melancholy tone, "But it was not taken up, and the world has never profited by a discovery that might have infinitely enriched it." We sat aghast at the folly and indifference of the human race.

Again, there is a story of how, at Hawarden, the conversation once turned on walnuts; and Mr. Gladstone, in a pause, said in thrilling tones: "I have not eaten a walnut since I was a boy of sixteen,"—and then added in a cadence of melancholy dignity, "nor, indeed, a nut of any kind." The auditor who told me the story said that the remark was received like an oracle, and that he had for the moment the impression that

he had been the recipient of a singular and momentous confidence—such was the magnetic force of the speaker. The effect, I used to think, was augmented by the forcible burr with which the letter R was pronounced, which gave a curious richness to the whole intonation.

But the most memorable instance of the same quality was afforded by a lecture I once heard him give at Eton on “Artemis.” The lecture was kept private, and reporters were excluded. I was asked to furnish a summary for *The Standard*, and sat close to the lecturer. He spoke for over an hour, with flashing eyes, magnificent gestures, and splendid emphasis. At the time it seemed to me one of the most absorbing and enrapturing discourses I had ever heard. He described in the course of it the Homeric adventure of a woman—I forget the reference—who, Mr. Gladstone said, “had grossly misconducted herself, in more than one particular.” We sat thrilled with horror at the thought of her depravity—and when he proceeded to state that the irate goddess “beat and belaboured her,” we drew a breath of satisfaction, and felt that the crime and punishment were duly proportioned. Again, when he told us that Artemis had special privileges in regard to cheese and butter, we were profoundly affected. At the end of the lecture, in reply to a vote of thanks, Mr. Gladstone made a moving speech, comparing himself, as a visitor to his old school, with Antæus drawing vigour from contact with his

native soil; and thus ended one of the most remarkable displays of fascination exerted over a spellbound audience I have ever heard. But when I came to draw up my report, I could not think where the whole thing had vanished to. The force and fragrance of the discourse had evaporated. The conclusions seemed unbalanced, the illustrations almost trivial. Not only could I not make my account impressive, I could not even make it interesting.

And this, I think, holds good of the quality of Mr. Gladstone's intellectual force; it was immensely strong, lucid, and copious; but it lacked charm and humanity. His prose writings are uninteresting; his Homeric studies are unreliable, and give one a sense of logical conviction rather than of imaginative perception; when one is reconstructing the life of a period, it cannot be done by a theory, however ingeniously poised on existing details. A case can never be constructed out of surviving details—the faculty of historical imagination must complete the vision. And this was what Mr. Gladstone could not do. He could not travel outside the facts, and therefore depended too much upon them. Facts must not be ignored, but they must not be accepted as complete. I even respectfully doubt whether his speeches will continue to be read for their literary qualities. They were astonishing manifestations of logical lucidity and verbal copiousness. He never hesitated for a word, and he wound up the

most intricate sentences, containing parenthesis within parenthesis, with unfailing certainty. But they are rhetorical displays of mental force rather than oratorical expressions of ideas and emotions; and they depended for their cogency upon the personal background, the energy and grandeur of the man. Again, Mr. Gladstone was too vehemently and absorbingly in earnest for literary achievement. He had little lightness of touch. It has been debated whether he had a sense of humour. The case may be argued in the affirmative, but it can hardly be sustained. He told stories humorous in intention, and his emotions sometimes flowered in an epigram. But his temperament, his sense of momentous issues, his moral force, were inconsistent with humour in its larger sense. It would have detracted rather than added to his power. If he had possessed humour, he could not ever have attained to the art of noble and genuine self-persuasion, which he undoubtedly practised. He has been accused of inconsistency; but he had what is the truest consistency of all, the power of being able to reconstruct his opinions with entire sincerity.

Whatever line of life Mr. Gladstone had chosen, he would have been supreme. That magnetic force, that intellectual vigour, sustained by purity of heart and motive, and controlled by courtesy, made him irresistible. He might have made an immense fortune as a merchant; he

might have been Lord Chancellor; he might have been Pope. He could not have been obscure and unknown; for he had a splendid and unembarrassed simplicity, a resistless force and energy, that streamed from him as light from the sun.

Yet, as one contemplates his triumphs, one finds oneself recurring in memory to the beautiful background of domestic quiet and stately dignity in which he was as much or more at home than in the public gaze. I can see him now in an old wide-awake and cloak—trudging off in the drizzle of an October morning to early service. I remember how, at Hawarden in 1896, on one of the sad evenings after my father's death, I dined alone with him and one other guest, and with what beautiful consideration he talked quietly on about things in which he thought we should be interested—things that needed neither comment nor response, and all so naturally and easily, that one hardly realised the tender thoughtfulness of it all.

And, last of all, I remember how I came one evening at a later date to dine at Hawarden, and was shown into a little half-lit ante-room next the dining-room. It was just at the beginning of his last illness, and he was suffering from discomfort and weakness. There on a sofa he sat, side by side with Mrs. Gladstone; they were sitting in silence, hand in hand, like two children, the old warrior and his devoted wife. It seemed

almost too sacred a thing to have seen; but it is not too sacred to record, for it seemed the one last perfect transfiguring touch of love and home.



## ROBERT BROWNING

THE published records of Robert Browning, for all their care and accuracy, fail to cast a light upon what is, after all, the central mystery of Browning's life—the fact that, somehow or other, as a figure and as a personality, he seems uninteresting. There was little, to the ordinary eye, that was salient or inspiring about his talk or his views of life. He had the power of merging himself, it would seem, in commonplace things in a commonplace way. He exhibited, of course, a thoroughly admirable and manly tone, optimistic, sociable, simple, straightforward. He never indulged his griefs, he had no petty vanity or spite, he was entirely wholesome-minded, sane, and reasonable. His talk, one would at least have thought, or his private letters, would have been picturesque, fanciful, humorous, and perceptive; and possibly in intimate *tête-à-tête* talk, which can hardly be photographed or recorded, this was so. But I confess to finding even his letters uninspiring. They are long-winded, elaborate, ungraceful, not even spontaneous.

I remember very well, as an undergraduate,

going to meet him at breakfast. He was staying with Sir Sidney Colvin, at Trinity, in the early eighties. I was a devout reader and a whole-hearted worshipper of the poet; indeed, I was secretary of the then newly-founded Cambridge Browning Society; and with what tremulous awe and expectation I accepted the invitation, and climbed the turret stair which led to Sir Sidney's rooms, can be better imagined than told. The party consisted, I think, of undergraduates only, eight or ten in number. There came into the room a short, sturdy man, with silky and wavy white hair, a short beard and moustache, his cheeks shaven, of a fresh and sanguine complexion. We were presented to him one by one. He shook hands with quiet aplomb and self-possession, said a few words to me about my father, whose guest he had been more than once; and we sat down to breakfast. Our host, I remember, skilfully turned the talk on to matters of ordinary literary interest. But the great man rose to no conversational fly. He was perfectly good-humoured, simple, and natural. He had no pontifical airs, he did not seem to feel bound to say witty or suggestive things, but neither was he in the least shy or embarrassed. He just talked away, readily and amusingly, as any well-informed, sensible man might talk. But we had, of course, expected that he would pontificate! He had a slightly foreign air, I remember thinking, as if he were a diplomat, used to cosmopolitan

society. But his simplicity, beautiful as it was, was not impressive, because there was nothing appealing or impulsive about it. It did not seem as if he were sparing himself, or holding forces in reserve, but as if he were a good-natured, almost bourgeois man, intelligent and good-humoured, and with no sense that he might be an object of interest to any one. There is a conversation recorded in the *Life*, when he was being received with intense enthusiasm by the authorities and students of some Northern University. Some one asked him what he felt about the applause and veneration he was receiving, and he said something to the effect that he had been waiting for it all his life. That does not seem in the least in character with his ordinary attitude. He did not seem to concern himself in earlier days with his own fame, to be either disappointed if it was withheld, or elated if it was showered upon him. He did, indeed, display some irritation with his critics when, in the period following the publication of *The Ring and the Book*, he suffered some detraction at their hands. But as a rule he seems to have taken criticism, favourable or unfavourable, with equanimity, good-nature, and indifference.

Of course, one is thankful in a way for this simplicity, in contrast to the self-conscious vanity from which even great poets like Wordsworth and Tennyson were not exempt. But if one compares Tennyson as a figure with Browning, there

is no doubt that Tennyson had a splendour and a solemnity of mien and utterance which produced upon his friends and contemporaries a sense of awful reverence and deference, which made him one of the stateliest and most impressive figures of his time.

And yet the wonder is that when Browning took pen in hand to write poetry, the whole situation was utterly transfigured. In spite of certain whimsical tricks and bewildering mannerisms, there came from that amazing brain and heart, not only a torrent of subtle and suggestive thought, but an acute and delicate delineation of the innermost mind of man, in words so beautiful, so concentrated, so masterly, that one can hardly conceive the process by which the thing was perceived, felt, arranged, selected, and finally presented. The amazing richness of sympathy, the marvellous intuition, the matchless range of it all, is a thing which is stupendous to contemplate. For not only could he touch the stops of the sweetest, most personal, most delicate emotions, not only could he interpret Nature—a flower, a sunset, a star—with the most caressing fineness, but he could raise to his lips a great trumpet of noble emotion, and blow huge, melodious blasts upon it which made glad the heart of man. One can be not only enraptured by the sweetness of his touch, but carried off one's feet in a sort of intoxication of hope and joy.

“What’s life to me?  
Where’er I look is fire; where’er I listen  
Music; and where I tend, bliss evermore.”

With lines like that ringing in one’s ears, one is bewildered as by the sudden telling of joyful news. It transfigures life to find a man who can look into it so deeply and so firmly, bringing back such treasure out of the rush and confusion of it all, and flinging it down so royally at the feet of those who toil on their way.

And yet the sort of kindly and bluff simplicity which Browning exhibited in daily life is just the sort of quality about which there seems nothing adventurous or quixotic. One would have said that he was a man who enjoyed life in its simplest forms—walking, talking, dining-out, listening to music—so directly that he would not have time or taste for any raptures, and so equably that he would not feel the need of any far-off hope or promise to sustain him or console him. One does not see where it all came from, or where he got all that complexity and intricacy of experience from. It seemed as though he could not take any but the obvious and rational view of life, as though he valued the ordinary conventions and customs of society highly; and yet whenever it came to verse, the thought broke out into music, and the heart behind seemed all alive with passion and beauty and irrational nobleness. Very possibly, if one had known him better, one might

have caught the accent of the great secrets that were beckoning and whispering in his mind; but the more that is revealed about his ordinary demeanour and the current of his days, the less there seems to reveal or to linger over. One sees his intense faculty of momentary enjoyment; but surely there can be no man of comparable greatness, whose special gift, too, was an almost shattering force of expression combined with an exquisite delicacy of touch, of whom so few *dicta* are preserved? He seems to have been able to keep the two lives serenely and securely apart, and to talk and gossip good-humouredly and easily in the outer chambers, with this furnace of emotion and excitement roaring and raging within. It is not as if he had lived in remote dreams and incommunicable romance, far off in some untroubled and wistful region. His concern was with the very sight and sound and scent of life, a fact shown ever so clearly by the marvellous catalogues of miscellaneous and nondescript objects which he crowds together on his pages. And one cannot make a greater mistake than by treating Browning, as he is often treated, as merely the poet of a devout kind of optimism. He is too often adopted as the prophet of vaguely intellectual and virtuous people, who, because they cannot see very far into life or unravel its confusions, think it as well to shout a sort of comprehensive Hallelujah over the good time coming: Browning's optimism did, no doubt,

emerge triumphant over circumstance. He said once to a man who complained that he found life complicated and disheartening, that it had not been so to him; and, indeed, his zest for life and living was so great that he was not struck dumb and melancholy by any catastrophe, because there was still so much left that was worth doing and saying. But there is a great deal in Browning beside his optimism. He does not make a simple melody out of life, he scores and orchestrates it; and his own brave solution is made not exactly out of life, but in spite of it.

But I find it very difficult to bring the two ends of the puzzle together. It may not be so with other readers of Browning, but it does seem to me that very little of that supreme and overpowering radiance, which gleams and flashes so prodigally and gloriously in his poetry, shone through into his life. He does not seem like a man who guarded a secret source of inspiration, but a man of small accomplishments, ordinary interests, and average views; and then one opens a volume of the lyrics, and the lightning flashes and the thunder rolls and answers, while all the while at any moment a glimpse of loveliness, a prospect of heavenly beauty, opens upon the view. And then in the front of that comes the quiet, burly figure that I remember, easy and unaffected, jingling the money in his pocket, not desirous of any confidences of intimate relations, just a comfortable citizen of the world.

## NEWMAN

I HAVE been reading Mr. Ward's *Life of Newman*, a book which, by its fine candour and high literary accomplishment, does credit both to the skill and the disinterestedness of the biographer.

But it is somehow a deeply painful, almost I had said, a heartrending book! One feels that it is like reading the life of an angel that has lost his way. One ends with an immense admiration for Newman's simplicity, sweetness, and stainlessness of character; but there is something strangely ineffective, wistful, and melancholy about his life. One feels that he was generally being bullied by some one, or at all events feeling that he was being bullied, disapproved of, hampered, set aside, misunderstood. He was like a child in the masterful hands of ambitious diplomatists and ecclesiastical lobbyists, like Manning and Talbot, both of them effective, pushing, scheming men, essentially second-rate. The whole impression given of the Papal Court is disagreeable; it seems to have been manned by unintelligent time-servers, ignorant opportunists, men who did not understand the pro-



blems of the time, men singularly lacking in apostolic fervour, and even, one would say, in disinterested Christian qualities, men without the wisdom of the serpent but not without the serpent's venom. These fierce ultramontanes would never allow Newman to take a hand in their game, while they traded to the full on his great reputation.

I remember once when I was staying at Hawarden, I heard Mr. Gladstone, talking about Manning, say that it must be always remembered that Manning was before all things a diplomatist; he added with great emphasis, "when it was a question of policy, everything else had to give way—Plato, or the almanac, or truth itself!"—and as one reads the *Life of Newman*, one feels that this is not an unjust judgment.

But one ends by feeling a still greater respect for Newman from the very fact that he never did get involved in any of the intrigues that were spun about him; he was used, when he was wanted; but he was never wholly trusted, and never given an independent sphere of action. It is clear that he was an unpractical man; he never brought off any of his plans, such as the Roman Catholic University in Ireland, or the College which he devised for Oxford. He had a muddled habit of doing business; he never seems to have been quite certain what he wanted, or to have made sure of his ground. He seems to have been almost deliberately allowed to make schemes for his own

amusement, yet never permitted to carry them out. One understands his depression, his helplessness, his consciousness of his "do-nothing life," as he called it in a moment of bitterness.

But what does come out very clearly, beside his weakness in practical things, is the strength and tenderness of his temperament. I never grasped clearly till I read this book what Newman really was; but I now seem to understand him. He was a poet, I believe, and an artist before everything. He had a high conception of moral beauty, but his adherence to Roman Catholicism was not primarily, I believe, an ecclesiastical matter. The Church of Rome appealed to him emotionally and artistically, with its dim and venerable traditions, its august history, its splendid associations, its ceremonial pomp, its roll of saints. The Church of England, with the vigorous liberalism of the Reformation dying down into Erastian and materialistic indolence, could not give him what he wanted. He desired something more ancient, more tender, more beautiful, more inspiring. I do not think that his intellectual power was very great. Carlyle said, coarsely and stupidly, that Newman had the brains of a rabbit; but reading the *Life* has made me see what Carlyle meant. Newman was not a clear or a deep thinker; he did not understand philosophy, and he dreaded all mental speculation. He wanted rest, comfort, peace, beautiful dreams, old memories, far-reaching emo-

tions. He had a logical mind, but he was at the mercy of superficial logic; his heart was convinced and his mind followed suit.

What he did possess was a matchless and incomparable power of expression. Everything that he wrote was soaked in personality. He had the power, which he and Ruskin alone possessed among the writers of the century, of thinking aloud in the most exquisite form. His writing is like a limpid stream, and he could give perfect form as he wrote to the tender, humorous, ardent, sweet qualities of his mind and nature. Whether it is a sermon, or a letter, or a memorandum, or a record, it is always the same—a sort of intimate and lucid conversation, flowing equably and purely out of heart and mind alike. That was his supreme gift, his artistry; the delicacy, the ingenuity, the studied unaffectedness, the perfume of all that he wrote. It is that which makes the *Apologia* so memorable a book, the power of wistful self-analysis, the sense that one is face to face with the very man himself in a kind of intimate *tête-à-tête*. Newman could say exactly what he meant and what he thought, and as he thought it. His mind moved exactly as fast as his pen; and because the *Apologia* was written in tears, as he confessed, so one can hear the accent of sorrow in the tone of the writer.

But there are many other things in the book which confirm this view of Newman. He said that the only thing he could write without any

trouble was poetry; and we know, too, from the *Life*, how he loved music, and how he suppressed his taste for it for many years, out of some sort of ascetic self-denial. But he added that music was the only thing that calmed and inspired him without fail, and the only thing which helped him to write. We see, too, how his friends gave him a violin when he was over sixty, and how he delighted in playing it, hour by hour, in the Oratorian country house at Rednal, where there was no one to disturb.

And then, too, there is the romantic affection which he bore to his friends, and to the well-loved scenes of his life. He describes how when he left Littlemore he kissed his bed and the mantelpiece of his room. And one becomes aware of his constant tearfulness, his agitated and emotional visits to places which he had loved. What could be more moving than the account quoted of Newman's only visit to Littlemore twenty years after he had left it? "I was passing by the church at Littlemore," wrote the eye-witness of the scene, "when I observed a man, very poorly dressed, leaning over the lych-gate, crying. He was to all appearance in great trouble. He was dressed in an old grey coat with the collar turned up, and his hat pulled down over his face as if he wished to hide his features." That was Newman, returning to see his old home! All this is strangely affecting, and testifies to the almost unbalanced sensitiveness and emotion of the man.

And then further one sees, running all through his life, the intense desire to be understood, loved, appreciated, praised. He was childlike in his horror of suspicion, of disapproval, of harshness. The success of the *Apologia* made all the difference to his happiness, and his satisfaction with the fame that it gave him is naïvely enough expressed. The reception of his Poems gave him deep satisfaction. The Cardinalate, one feels, was almost too deeply valued by him. It was not enough that he should be secretly aware of the purity of his motives, the devotion of his life: it was a necessity to him that others should know it, admit it, appreciate it. He wanted honour, affection, and recognition. He could not endure in silence; he had the natural egotism of the artist; he wanted to tell his own story, to explain his own thoughts, to express his own convictions. In one sense he shrank from doing this, but what he really dreaded was criticism and discredit. No one can read the *Apologia* without feeling that the writer tells his tale with delight and interest; and it is the wistful appeal for approval and esteem and sympathy which makes the book what it is.

I do not say that Newman was not a man of intense spiritual ardour: he was a moralist to the inmost fibre of his being; but so were Ruskin, Carlyle, and Tennyson; and it is with these that Newman is to be reckoned, and not with philosophers, prelates, and ecclesiastical politicians.

Of course, his temperament condemned him to great suffering; and the impression left by the *Life* is mainly that of suffering, in spite of his occasional and tardy triumphs. The time between his joining the Church of Rome and the publication of the *Apologia* gives one the impression that he was then a thoroughly disheartened and dreary man, sinking deeper and deeper into indolent despondency, as his attempts to do some work for the Church failed one by one. The sunshine comes back at the end, but the pathos of the intervening years is great; and the portraits show this very clearly, as the rather prim and hard features of the Anglican period lapse into a sad, helpless, and rueful expression, with the lines of weariness, hypochondria, and disappointment graving themselves deeply on his face. It is very interesting to see how much Newman thought, in his sad days, about his health, how afraid he was of paralysis, how much he lived under a premonition of death; and how all that uneasy misery cleared off when he found himself famous and honoured.

But of all the melancholy scenes of the book, the saddest is the visit to Keble in 1865, where Newman met Pusey. He had much desired to see Keble, but he could not bear the idea of meeting Pusey. He went, however, and owing to some misunderstanding Pusey appeared also. It was twenty years since they had met. When Newman arrived at the door, Keble was standing in

the porch. They did not even recognise each other, and Newman actually produced his card! Keble was very much agitated at the fact that Pusey was in the house, and said he must go and prepare him for the meeting. When Newman went in, he found Pusey in the study, shrinking back, as he says he himself would have done. He was startled, pained, and grieved by Pusey's appearance, and was distressed by the way that Pusey stared at him, and by the "condescending" manner in which he spoke. They had a talk and dined together, and Newman said that it was a heavy pain to think that they were three old friends, meeting after twenty years, "without a common cause, or free outspoken thought—kind indeed, but subdued and antagonistic in their language to each other." Keble was delightful, Newman said, though he was deaf, with impaired speech, and slow of thought; and he adds that Keble displayed much sympathy and interest towards himself, but very little towards Pusey.

That seems to me a simply tragical meeting, and they never met again, though Keble wrote afterwards to Newman, saying, "When shall we three meet again? . . . when the hurly-burly's done."

It is indeed a melancholy thought. Here were three men, the closest possible friends, who had championed a great cause together, and restored vitality to the Church of England. Newman said that he was aware that as far as regarded their

faith, Keble and Pusey agreed with him exactly on every point but one—the submission to the authority of Rome. And yet for all the old days of friendship, and for all their unity of faith, they were suspicious, hostile, utterly separated. It is hard not to feel that there is something tragically amiss in all this. If the old friendship had just shone through, touched with sadness at the inevitable separation; if they could have talked and smiled and even wept together, it would surely have been more Christian, more human than this harsh mistrust. One feels the Gospel of brotherly love must have been somehow strangely misapprehended if it could not for once bring the three old comrades' hearts together. Our Lord indeed foresaw the dividing force of Christianity; but one feels that when He spoke of a man's foes being those of his own household, He was surely speaking of the conflict between the Faith and Paganism, and not of disunion between devout and sincere Christians!

And it is this finally which casts a shadow over the whole book, because it reveals the awful gulf of sectarianism, the emphasis on points of difference, the dreadful animosity kindled by faith diversely interpreted and held. As systems, doctrines, Churches develop, it seems as if the only effect could be to plunge Christians deeper and deeper into mutual hostility and further away from the purpose and design of Christ. It seems as though the Faith had evoked and en-



listed the stubbornness and self-assurance and the evil tempers of political partisanship, and as though the simplicity and loving-kindness of the Gospel message were gone past recovery. And thus, though one is strangely drawn to Newman himself, because one discerns in him an affection which did somehow outlast and overtop all controversy and bewildered disunion, one is painfully struck with the materialism, the secularity, the self-seeking of ecclesiastical politics, and one closes the book with a sigh.

## ARCHIPPUS

I SAT in my stall in the College chapel listening to the lesson, read by a boyish reader from the gilded eagle lectern. The crimson hangings of the sanctuary filled the air with colour, the golden organ-pipes gleamed above; the light came richly in through the stained glass, and lost itself in the gloom of the dark, carved roof. The rows of surpliced figures sat still and silent, listening or not listening, dreaming of things before and behind, old adventures, all they meant to do and be, the thought perhaps taking on a gentler tinge from the ancient beauty of the place.

Such homely advice, too, it all was!—advice to husbands, wives, children, masters, servants, shrewd enough and kindly; not losing sight of daily life and its interests, and yet keeping in view something noble and beautiful behind it all, the unseen greatness of life, so easily forgotten.

My eyes strayed further down the page of the Bible I held in my hand. I do not know anything more touching, more inspiring than the little personal messages and counsels sent to individual saints: mere names most of them! How

little St. Paul himself dreamed, as he wrote in prison, in discomfort and anxiety, what would become of his letters! After advice faithfully given, his mind would pass to the remembered faces of his friends, simple people enough, and he would fill his page with greetings and words of love. Those names of men and women bring the whole thing down on to such a tender and human plane, speak with such a directness of love and affection.

And they, too, who received the messages, if they could have pictured such a place as this chapel, its richness, its solemnity, what would they have felt at hearing their homely names thus read aloud, and the words of counsel and love addressed to them?—and read, too, not in one, but in thousands of great churches, which to see would have been to them almost like a vision of the courts of heaven, with the organ music rolling under the vaulted roofs. Fame? Yes, a kind of fame; nothing known of them, nothing certain about them, like a name on a headstone in a place of graves, with a date and some faint record of virtues and graces—all else forgotten.

Archippus! He is mentioned twice in Scripture; he is a “fellow-soldier” in the Epistle to Philemon; and here he has a direct enough message. “And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it.” That was to be his business.

Yet we know nothing of him, of his past or his future; there is a faint old story of his martyrdom, possibly true enough; but what the ministry was and how he executed it, of that we know nothing.

I sometimes wish that our splendid version of the Bible had not won from use and ceremony and from the very veneration paid it, quite so solemn and stately a sound. As an epistle is translated, with its "thou" and "ye," it has the air of a princely document, such as a great bishop might write from his magnificence to other stately persons. When St. Paul speaks of the Epistle to the Colossians being read to the Church at Laodicea, and the epistle to the Laodiceans being read to the Church at Colossæ, one thinks of some great ceremonial, with a parchment loudly recited in a great building thronged with worshippers. One forgets how homely it all was in reality. It is a letter really to be read at a meeting of very ordinary folk in a poor room, a letter such as a mission-teacher might write to a few old friends. And one forgets, too, the novelty of it all. Now that Christianity has taken a place among the forces of the world, and is mixed up with so much that is powerful and conventional and respectable, one forgets how new, how suspicious, how unconventional, how socialistic shall we say, it all seemed—it was a handful of working people comforting themselves with a message of utterly new and unexpected things. It had

none of the weight of the world behind it; it broke away from all received ideas and prejudices. These people who got this letter, with its advice and words of love, were no doubt looked upon by neighbours as fanatical, discontented, fantastic persons, who could not take life for granted in the old comfortable way, but must throw themselves into a wild, radical, restless fancy, taught them by an insignificant, vehement, fiery-tempered, wandering preacher, who came from no one knew where, and was now justly in prison for stirring up strife. Colossæ was a decaying town, its trade vanishing, its old importance gone; yet how its easy-going, sensible citizens must have despised the new ideas that had seized upon a few fanciful folk; how they must have shaken their heads over the movement and mistrusted it! The people who took it up were doing, they felt, an unpopular and unpractical thing, and no good could come of it! That is how we must look at it all. Christianity was not then a beneficent, well-endowed, familiar power, but something new, disturbing, dangerous. I daresay the Christians at Colossæ had a hard time of it, and needed all the affection and advice which St. Paul could give them!

It is not only a comforting letter—St. Paul was very anxious about a certain kind of teaching, it is hard to say exactly what, which seemed to be mixing itself up with the faith. He is severe enough about that. It is not the letter

of a man who is wholly satisfied. Something is very wrong; and neither can we feel that all the very plain advice to husbands and wives, masters and servants, came loosely out of St. Paul's mind. He must have heard of misdoings and misunderstandings. The seed was not growing up happily and strongly; there were weeds in abundance, and they must be rooted up. But the old affections come out at the end; and this is perhaps the secret of the intensity of St. Paul's writings; the large heart that took men and women in so readily, and never forgot them. He never condoned what was amiss; he wrote in anger, grief, and indignation; but at the end, the recollections of well-known faces and gestures and friendly words crowd in upon him, and the last words are always words of personal love.

It is very wonderful all this—more wonderful than we often allow ourselves to believe, that these old messages and greetings should stand out to-day with such an absolute freshness, and touch so many hearts even now. What St. Paul says to Archippus he says to many. Archippus had found a work for which he was suited. He must have grown a little tired of it, perhaps, when the novelty and excitement had worn off. St. Paul cannot feel perfectly sure of him, or he would not have sent him so plain a message. He had gifts; was he using them?

We need not apply the words too technically to an office or a priesthood; the word used for

ministry means a service. It was probably a very informal thing: a duty of speech, of care for poorer Christians, of keeping a congregation together. He had some sort of influence with other people no doubt, a kindly manner, an affectionate heart, some power of expressing what he felt. Probably he had some business of his own; he was a shopman, perhaps, a worker of some kind; yet he was worthy to be St. Paul's fellow-soldier, if not now, at all events later, when the little anxious message had done its work.

And so the figure of Archippus gleams out faintly for an instant on the background of the past; a man who had a work to do, and could do it, but was careless; and yet on whom the reproof had its effect. He is a type of thousands of lives, that do their work in their own little circle, with no great reward, no escape out of obscurity; and yet for all that Archippus has written his name upon the world, as many great generals and judges and statesmen have not written it, by what we strangely call chance. Reckon the chances, so to speak, that a letter written from prison, and sent by faithful hands over land and sea, to a knot of old friends, would have perished utterly out of the records of the world! It is something more than chance which has preserved it, and brought it to pass that it should be read, as I heard it to-day, through the length and breadth of a land like our own, nearly twenty centuries after.

I think that if we could put some thoughts like these more often into our minds when we hear the Bible read in church, we should be more interested, more amazed, more moved by the extraordinary nature of it all. Yet we take it all dully as a matter of course; perhaps we try to give it a demure attention, and the name of Archippus and the work he had to do just falls like a ripple on minds full of plans and schemes and hopes and interests, not mingling with them, and certainly not changing them! Yet it needs no great exercise of the imagination to think of these things. They are in a score of books; we have but to ask ourselves a question or two, and we are back in the dark past, with Christian light stealing into a dim world by a hundred channels, confirming the hopes of thousands of hearts, bringing them just the one thing needed to put the cares of the world in their place, whispering a secret of life and immortality. The world is not soon changed; life and the cares of life press heavily on most of us; and then there comes a man sent from God, like St. Paul, and shows that life is all knit together by invisible chains from the friends and neighbours whom we know so well, to the unseen persons who are fearing and hoping as we are fearing and hoping; and thus it passes back into the old records, and shows us the long procession of humanity moving through the years, straining their eyes and ears for the light and sound of the message; and then



the thoughts and affections that bind us all together pass still further and deeper into the darkness, to find their home in the heart of God.

## KEATS

I BOUGHT at a bookstall a few days ago, before a long journey, a volume of Keats's poems, and read it through from end to end. Was there ever such an astonishing performance? That a man who died, after a long period of illness, at the age of twenty-five, should produce such a body of work, so much of it of the very finest and purest quality, is surely an absolutely unique phenomenon!

There is much to be said for devouring a poet whole like this. Of course, the right way to read poetry as a rule is to sip it leisurely, to savour it, to turn it over and over in the mind, to learn it by heart. Thus one gets at the beauty of the word and the phrase.

But if one is very familiar with a poet, it is a good thing occasionally to gallop through his works at a sitting. One gets a wholly different view of him. It is like flashing through a scene in a motor which one has explored only on foot. I motored the other day through some country with which I was familiar as a child, where I had loitered with my nurse in a slow, childish

caravan. It was a great revelation. In memory I saw the little walks we took, in a series of vignettes, but the whole lie of the landscape was unfamiliar. Flying through it in a motor, I saw all sorts of unsuspected connections and nearnesses. What had seemed to me tracts of vast and mysterious extent, lying between the range of two familiar walks, resolved themselves into little spinneys and belts of trees just dividing road from road. What had appeared to me to be two perfectly distinct forests were now revealed as one and the same narrow belt of woodland.

Thus in reading a poet quickly from end to end, one sees that the lyrics and odes which appeared to be so sharply differentiated are but as separate flowers growing on the same plant. One realises, too, the connection with earlier and later poets, the genealogy of genius. I had never seen before how closely allied Keats was, in "Hyperion," to Milton—and with a shock of surprise I saw what a prodigious effect Keats had had upon two subsequent poets so unlike as Tennyson and William Morris. Perhaps there is a little loss of mystery and distance, but that is amply compensated for by the sense of unity and personality which one gains.

And, after all, the mystery is as great as ever. How did the marvellous boy with his bourgeois surroundings, his very inferior friends, the unlovely suburban atmosphere which hangs even

about his splendid letters—how did he manage to soar above it all, to dream such remote and delicate dreams? More marvellous still, how did he contrive to express it all? It makes one wonder if there is not some secret pre-existence about the human spirit, when one sees a boy using words with this incredible ease and felicity, with no practise behind him, no apprenticeship, no labour, no training. The imaginative part of it is not so marvellous—indeed, “Endymion” reveals a certain poverty of imagination—it is the technical skill of craftsmanship, the instinctive art, which is so utterly bewildering!

The little book which I read had gathered up into it all the fragments and chips out of the poet's workshop, the doggerel he spun off in his letters, the dreadful play of “Otho,” the simply appalling “Cap and Bells,” that heartrending mixture of fantastic nonsense and vulgar humour. I do not think these things ought to be reprinted, because people of uncritical minds get muddled into thinking that it is all equally good. I cannot help feeling the sense of horror and shame which the poet himself would have writhed under, at the inclusion of these trivial and abject bits of writing into one and the same volume. But I was glad that they were there for my own sake, because they showed what a power of self-criticism Keats had; and, moreover, they all cast a certain light upon his mind—its exuberance, its gaiety, its abandon.

The life which it reveals is a very tragic one. There can be no doubt that Keats sowed the seeds of consumption by his devoted tendance of his invalid brother, at a time when it was not realised how contagious the malady was; and he developed it by overtiring himself on his long walking tour, in which he disregarded all rules of diet and health. Then there comes in his frantic passion for a commonplace and rather inferior girl—somewhat of a minx, if the truth must be told; and there follows the horrible despair of the last voyage, and the terrible struggle with death in the high house near the noisy piazza in Rome, with all the tortures of pent-up imagination and frenzied love to contend with; and so he passes into the unknown, very gallantly at last.

If one cares very much for poetry and the beauty of thought and word, it is tempting to lose oneself in a sad rebellion at the waste, the ruthless snapping of so golden a thread of life as this. But it must somehow be a very faithless misunderstanding of the meaning of life, if one permits oneself so to impugn its tragedies. If we believe in immortality, if we trust that experience is somehow proportioned to the individual need, we may shudder perhaps at the sharpness of death; we may feel with Dr. Johnson that after all it is a sad thing for a man to lie down and die; but we must go on to believe that there is a very wonderful secret involved in so wild and

mournful a prelude. One must be prepared to think of Keats as rejoicing in his martyrdom, the fiery corner once turned, and as thus gaining for his spirit a joy which could be won in no easier fashion.

But this is all in a region of faith and hope; let us interrogate ourselves closely as to what it is that Keats and such as Keats do for the world. What is the meaning of this treasure of fame and gratitude heaped by mankind on such a brief life? Keats's songs go on being reprinted, his life is written over and over again, the most trivial of his letters are jealously edited, the most trifling records are anxiously ransacked, to catch one glimpse of him from the oblivious past. What would the great personages of the day—the dukes, the politicians, the soldiers, the courtiers—have felt, if they could have certainly foreseen that when their achievements and progresses and conversations had been consigned to blank indifference and darkness, the world would still have been greedy to hear the meanest gossip about the consumptive medical student, sprung from the livery-stable, with a taste for writing verse?

And what is the meaning of the extraordinary fact? Why does the world cling so tenderly and anxiously to the memory of its writers, to whom it found no time to attend when they rose like a star in the night, and take so little interest in the personality of those whom at the time it envied and respected? There must be something

in imagination and expressive art which is very dear to the heart of the world. It is surely that the spirit of humanity is most deeply concerned in finding, if it can, some refuge for its wearied self from the harsh experience of the world? However much the selfish materialist may deride the eager pursuit of beauty as a dallying with sentiment and emotion, yet the sense of the world is ultimately on the side of emotion, and in favour of all who can show us how to see and how to feel. "Turn away mine eyes, lest they behold vanity," said the Psalmist; and a poet like St. Augustine, after an exquisite apologue on the beauty of light, "sliding by me in unnumbered guises," can only end by praying that he may be delivered from its seductions. But even though one cannot rest in the beauty of forms and colours, yet the more that one looks into the heart of great moralists like St. Francis of Assisi, the more one realises that they did not see righteousness in the guise of a strict tyrant, but as a power so utterly beautiful that, having once seen it, one could never wholly lose the love of it.

It is there, I believe, that the secret lies; that the soul must pass on through what seems brilliant and charming to the love of what is true and pure, until it can say, as Wordsworth said of duty:

"Stern lawgiver! Thou yet dost wear  
Thy godhead's most benignant grace;  
Nor know we anything so fair  
As is the smile upon thy face."

## RODDY

ONLY a dog, after all! Yes, only the one member of the household who was never sick or sorry, who was always ready for play or for companionship, never resented anything, only claimed love; who, if he was punished, never thought anything but forgiveness, never lost patience, was never injured or vexed; if one trod upon him by accident, was sure that one did it for the best, and came to be pardoned; who saw one depart with sorrow and welcomed one back with overwhelming joy. That is what it is to be only a dog!

When Roddy came to us, a collie puppy, six years ago, he had been roughly trained, and could not believe at first that we meant him well; but in six months he was the darling of the place, with his hazel eyes, so full of expression, his silky, brown hair, his wavy tail. He learned endless tricks, and was as anxious to make out what was wanted of him as a child could be, and as proud of showing off. He learned one or two things that I never could comprehend, such as distinguishing between the right and left hand, however much one interlaced the fingers; and I



never saw a dog so perfectly obedient. He made friends with cats and kittens, fowls and pigeons, and even with the peacock—his only grief was if any of them were taken more notice of than himself. Then he pulled one's coat or licked one's hand, and was overjoyed to be restored to favour. He was a sensitive dog and extremely timid. There were places in the roads all about, which he would never pass, because he had once had encounters with strange dogs there. He slipped off, took a circuit, and joined one again, apologising for his absence. There was a cottage gate close by, where he once, when walking with me, put his head in, and was greeted with a bark let off straight in his face, like a peal of thunder, from a chained retriever, just round the palings. He came up to me, pale under his coat and shuddering, with a look of horror at a world where such terrors could be. There was even a farmyard from which he had fled in hot haste, pursued by an elderly hen.

At one time he took to going off for a few days at a time. He made friends, we thought, with a family at a farm a little way off, and it amused him to pay visits. But my sister sewed round his neck a letter, in a canvas case, addressed "To the people at the house where he goes," and the next time he went off, he came back in a twinkling. We could never make out that he poached or hunted, but he did ramble in the woods, no doubt, especially with a naughty little mongrel,

who lived in a hutch in the stable-yard. So after this was discovered, Toby went out for his run in the morning, while Roddy was chained up, and then Roddy was free for the day.

And so the happy life went on, year by year. Joy and sorrow alike came to the house, passed through it, left their mark on all but Roddy. He alone knew nothing of it all; and in days of grief and unhappiness, it was a relief that his horizon at least was unclouded, that he required his plate to be filled, barked gently at closed doors, pleaded for his walk. How often, in days of ill-health, have I watched him lie at my feet, chin on carpet, just following every motion with half-open, up-turned eye, ready to spring into life at a word, or resigning himself to slumber with a happy sigh.

One day, a month ago, he slipped off at night-fall. The next day he was seen by the miller, trotting demurely along the road; and that is the last we know of him.

Now, I will not here be sentimental over what has happened. Sentiment is the exaggeration of things that are hardly sad, for the luxury of pathos. But there is no luxury here. One simply misses Roddy at every turn. I come back after an absence, and he does not come scampering out with a joyous outcry. His plate is put away on the shelf. His chain rusts in the stable. Yet as I go out to walk, I glance round for him, check his name on my lips, and at the covert edge turn round to see if he is following.

What has happened to him? Alas, I have little doubt. I could almost bear to think he had been kidnapped, because, wherever he is, he will love and be loved, though perhaps a dim wonder may trouble his brain as to what has become of his old friends.

But all round us game is carefully preserved: it is the time when the young pheasants are about, when keepers are watchful and merciless. I think of him as slipping into the wood. A rabbit bolts from the fern and pops in at a sandy hole under the bank. The chase is irresistible, and Roddy sets to work digging in the soft soil, so intent that he does not see the keeper approach through the bracken. The gun is cautiously lifted.

Well, I hope that, if it had to be, the shot did its work. He lies bewildered, quivering; perhaps a little blood trickles from the hazel eye, surprised and faint at the last passage; the sandy paws twitch and are still. Then comes the speedy burial, and the pretty brown limbs, so active an hour ago, huddled limply together . . . earth to earth. Roddy lies in the woodland he has loved, and the star peeps over the covert edge; soon the rain drips upon the mound, where the tangled hair and mouldering bones settle down for the last long sleep.

I suppose no one is to blame; a keeper but obeys his orders, and a poaching dog is a nuisance, so all the love and sweet service are swept away that a few sportsmen may shoot a rabbit or two

more, and that the bag may be fuller. There *must* be something wrong with the system that brings that to pass, though it is hard to disentangle!

One ought not to keep dogs at all, I think. One can't explain to them the strange and brutal ways of men, outside the charmed circle of gentle words and caresses. And they leave such a gap, such a silence, such a sorrowful ache of heart! A dozen times I stop, as I pace to and fro, remembering how Roddy came bounding through the high-seeded grass. A dozen times I stand and look, listen and hope in vain, by open door and clicking garden-latch, by flower-border and sunny lawn, where Roddy comes again no more.

## THE FACE OF DEATH

I WAS looking through an old diary to-day, when I came upon the entry of an experience that befel me in Switzerland a good many years ago. It was nothing less than being face to face, for some twenty minutes, not with the possibility but with the certainty of death. I think it may interest others to know what such an experience is like from the inside. I will just tell the story as simply and plainly as I can. The entry is so full—it was made on the following day—that I am adding no details; in fact, there are certain unnecessary points which I shall omit.

I was staying at the Bel Alp in August, 1896, with a friend, Herbert Tatham, who has since, strange and sad to say, lost his life in the Alps. We were doing a good deal of climbing, and were in full training. I must add that a week or two before there had been a fatal accident at the same place; an elderly man, a lawyer I think, whose name I have forgotten, lost his footing on a steep rocky ridge not far from the hotel, and was killed by the fall.

It was just at the end of our stay. We had

got up early one morning and had climbed the Unter-bachhorn, a little rock peak not very far from the hotel. It was not a difficult climb. The day was exquisitely fine, and we were in high spirits. We left the rocks to cross the Unter-bachhorn glacier, below which there was nothing but grass slopes. The glacier is a very smooth one, with no visible crevasses; just a surface of slightly undulating snow and ice, but at a steep angle. We were still roped, Clemens Ruppen, the guide, in front, I came next, and Tatham was behind. The snow was a little soft. We were going at a good pace, when I saw by the marks on the glacier, to left and right, that we were crossing a concealed crevasse. At the same instant the snow gave way under my foot. I gave a spring, but trod short of the other side, and swung down into the cavity like a sack. My first thought was one of amusement, and I expected to be jerked out in an instant. When the snow that came down with me had fallen past me, I looked about to see where I was. I was hanging at the very top of a huge wide blue crevasse, as though I were dangling at the very summit of the vaulting of a cathedral. I could see by the rather dim light that the crevasse stretched a long way—perhaps eighty yards—to my left, and not very far to my right. There were great ice-bridges spanning the gulf, perhaps ten feet below me, but to my left and right—and there were none immediately beneath. The upper part of

the crevasse was all a delicate blue colour, but it ran down to a black fathomless gulf, with an unseen stream roaring below. I made desperate efforts to lodge my back against one side and my feet against the other, but the crevasse was too wide and sloped away from me, and the ice was very hard and smooth. I could not get a hold or a purchase of any kind. I tried to dig my pointed stick in, but the surface was too hard. These exertions were very laborious, and, suspended as I was by the rope under my arms, I felt I could not persevere long.

I was hanging with my head about four or five feet below the edge, and the guide hauled me up to within a foot or two from the top, but I could not reach the other side. Moreover, the ice against which I was drawn overhung, so that every tug jammed me against it.

The guide shouted to Tatham to cross the crevasse. I heard him jump over, and a good deal of snow fell on me. They then both pulled. My left arm, unfortunately, was caught between the two lengths of rope. It was instantly numbed, and was drawn up against the overhanging ice, so that I thought it would break. The rope round me kept tightening as they pulled. I heard the guide groan as he tugged; they shouted to me at intervals that it would be all right in a moment.

Then suddenly, without any warning, I became horribly faint. My knee, which I had jammed against the ice, slipped, and I swung down sev-

eral feet. Again I was pulled up, again I got my knee against the ice; again it slipped, and I swung down. This happened four or five times.

Then they desisted for a moment, and Tatham, coming nearer the edge, cut away the lip of the crevasse with his axe. The snow fell upon my upturned face, some of it into my mouth, which refreshed me. But whether it was that the snow filled up the space between my shirt and coat, or whether the rope was tightened, I do not know; but now my right hand became numb. My cap fell off, and I could see my hand, which was on a level with my face, grow white and rigid, and the stick fell from it without my being able to retain it in my stiffened fingers; and I then became aware that I was strangling. I shouted out to Tatham that this was the case, but either he did not hear me properly or could not get the guide to understand, for the rope kept on tightening. The danger, I afterwards learned, was that they dared not go too near to the lip of the crevasse, which was thin and brittle, for if one of them had slipped in, the other could not have sustained two of us, and we must all have inevitably fallen to the bottom.

Suddenly it dawned upon me that I was doomed. I saw that I should either die by strangulation, or that I should lose consciousness and slip through the rope, which was rising higher and higher towards my arms. The strange thing was that I had no sense of fear, only a



dim wonder as to how I should die, and whether the fall would kill me at once. I had no edifying thoughts. I did not review my past life or my many failings. I wondered that a second fatal accident should happen so soon in the same place, thought a little of my relations, and of Eton, where I was a master, wondered who would succeed to my boarding-house, and how my pupils would be arranged for. I remember, too, speculating what death would be like. But I was now rapidly becoming unconscious, with the veins in . . . my head beating like hammers, and I heard a horrible snoring sound in my ears, which I dimly understood to be my own labouring breath. Opening my eyes, which I had shut, I saw the chasm all full of my floating breath. All this time I did not know what they were doing, when suddenly a shower of ice and snow fell on me and around me. Then there was a silence. I tried feebly to put my foot out again to the side, but could not hardly move it. Then I think I did become unconscious for a moment, my last thought being a sort of anxious longing to get the thing over as soon as possible.

I did not know and did not care what they were doing above me, as I have said, if, indeed, I was aware of anything but failing life and swimming darkness; when suddenly the beating in my head relaxed, and I knew that I was still alive. There came a steady strain and a jerk; I was drawn out of the chasm, and saw the

glacier and the plain beyond, and felt the sun. I saw the two below me pulling desperately at the ropes. I contrived to put my foot upon the edge behind me and give a thrust, and next minute I came out and fell prostrate on the ice. The guide lost his own balance, and fell over on his face at the sudden relaxing of the strain.

Then came the oddest experience of all. I was not for a minute or two conscious of any relief of mind or gladness; I had a sense of painfully reviving energy, as of one awakened from sleep, and indeed a half-wish that I had not been recalled to life, as though interrupted in a nearly completed task. I saw, too, by the pallor of my friend and by the childlike emotion of the guide, how far worse it had been for them than for me. The guide moaned and shed tears, embraced me and laid his cheek to mine, held me at arm's length, and embraced me again. I found that he had run a great risk to save me; he had come close to the edge, and hewed it all away with his axe; without this I could not have been saved, and a fracture of the ice or a slip would have been the end of all three of us. I was stiff and bruised, my hands very much cut from the edge of the ice, my knees black and blue; and I carried the pattern of the rope stamped on my back for some weeks. I suppose that about twenty minutes in all had elapsed since my fall. I did not feel shaken, though thirsty and languid; but I addressed the guide as Felix—the name of a

former guide—for a minute or two; and in five minutes we were descending the glacier homewards. The time had not seemed at all long to me; and, as I have said, I had no touch of pain, only faintness and discomfort, and no sense either of dread or fear. It only gradually came upon me what I had escaped.

I was feverish and uncomfortable in the evening, but slept sound without any dreams; and I have never been able to trace any evil effects or any loss of nerve to the incident. I suppose that the whole thing was so brief and painless that the nerves really did suffer no particular shock. The cuts on my hands healed with quite incredible rapidity, owing, I was told, to the untainted material—the purest ice—with which the wounds were inflicted. I remember that Clemens came the next day to see me, and told Tatham that he had kept waking in nightmare and agitation all the succeeding night, “in fear for the lieber Herr, Erzbischofsohn, my friend, whom I love.”

That is the story of my taste of death. The strange thing about it to me was its utter unlikeness to anything that I should have imagined such an experience to be, the simplicity of it, the commonplace thoughts that came to me, the entire absence of any tragic, or melodramatic, or indeed emotional elements. I should have supposed, indeed, that it would have been all emotion; but I suppose that emotion comes with

reflection, and that we pass through the most critical and tragic moments of life without any immediate consciousness that they are either critical or tragic at all.

## THE AWETO

I WAS dining the other night with some friends; after dinner our host said that he had something very curious to show us. He went out of the room, and returned in a moment with a shallow, blue box, which he opened very carefully. Inside the box there was a dry and shrivelled caterpillar about three inches long; out of its head grew a long horn, which must have been at least twice as long as the caterpillar. Some one said that the horn must be a very inconvenient appendage. Our host laughed and said that it was a very inconvenient appendage indeed, but fortunately the caterpillar had been unaware of the inconvenience. He told us that it was a rare specimen. It came, he said, from New Zealand, and it is called the Aweto. It is a caterpillar which lives underground. Its habits are mysterious. No one knows how it propagates its species, or what it turns into. It lives on eating seeds which it finds in the earth. There is one particular seed or spore which it cannot resist the temptation to eat, but it cannot swallow or digest it. The seed sticks in its throat, and im-

mediately in that congenial position it begins to sprout. The plant breaks out behind the caterpillar's head, and the roots grow into its body. The plant comes up like a slender rush; little is known of the plant either, but it does not appear to be able to germinate unless it is found and eaten by this particular caterpillar. I said that it all reminded me of the Bread-and-Butter-fly in *Through the Looking Glass*, which lived upon weak tea and bread and butter. Alice asked the Gnat what happened if it could not find any, and the Gnat replied that it died. Alice said that this must happen very often, to which the Gnat replied, "It always happens." The whole story, in fact, is so entirely whimsical that it seems to suggest that Nature is sometimes actuated by an irresponsible and rather cruel kind of humour. Such an extraordinary chain of circumstances can hardly come by chance, and yet so fortuitous and uncomfortable an arrangement seems hardly worth while inventing. Yet it goes on! The plant presumably sheds its seed into the ground in the hopes that some other Aweto may come along and do what is necessary. While if some more fortunate Aweto, in the course of its subterranean existence, does not come across one of these particular seeds, it may live a happy and blameless life, and turn into whatever it has a mind to become.

Our host said that he believed that the story of the Aweto had once been used by a preacher

before Queen Victoria, as an illustration in his sermon, and that the Queen had been so much interested in the story that she had asked to have an Aweto sent for her inspection from some Natural History Museum. I find it hard to think what the application can have been. The poor Aweto has got to live, and it can hardly be expected to know, without being expressly informed, that the particular seed in question has such very unpleasant habits from the point of view of the Aweto. Neither can it be expected that the Aweto, on finding what it had done, would leave its burrow and betake itself to the nearest medical man for assistance, as the lion with the thorn in its foot came to Androcles in the old story. On the other hand, it would be highly satisfactory if the Aweto knew of some other seed which would act, let us say, as an emetic, and more appropriate still if the Aweto were prudent enough to carry a small store of medicinal seeds about with it in case of emergencies!

But I suppose that in a general way the story may be taken to apply to the indulgence of some fault, of a kind which seems harmless and natural enough; because the essence of the situation is that the Aweto does not appear to know, as most animals do, that the particular seed is not good for it to eat.

It seems to me very much like the failing to which good people are prone—the tendency to enjoy finding fault with others. It seems at first

sight that this is rather a noble and conscientious thing to do; if you are quite sure that you are right, and have a strong belief in the virtuous and high quality of your own principles, you begin to practice what is called dealing faithfully with other people, pulling them up, checking them, drenching them with good advice, improving the tone. Such people often say that of course they do not like doing it, but that they must bear witness to what they believe to be right. Of course, it is sometimes necessary in this world to protest; but the worst of the censorious habit of mind is this, that it begins with principles and then extends to preferences. The self-righteous man begins to feel that the hours he keeps, the occupations he follows, the recreations he enjoys, the food which agrees with him, are not matters of personal taste, but things that are virtuous and high-minded. If he likes jam with his tea, he will say that fruit is always wholesome, and that the taste for jam is a sign of a simple and unspoilt palate. If he does not like jam with his tea, he will say that it is wasteful and luxurious, and that people ought not to tamper with their digestions. If he likes going to the theatre, he says that the drama is an inspiring and ennobling thing; if he does not like the theatre, he will say that it is a waste of time and a pernicious and distracting influence, beset with moral dangers. As life goes on he becomes an intolerable person with whom no one can feel



at ease. One cannot say what one thinks before him, for fear of incurring his disapproval. The head of the rush is beginning to show above ground, and the roots are spreading into the body! Then perhaps the censorious person marries, and improves his family out of all sympathy with what is fine and generous, by making goodness into a thoroughly disagreeable thing, which is never comfortable unless it is making some one else uncomfortable.

The pity of it is that the censorious man is so often a fine character spoiled by egotism. One of the things which it is absolutely necessary to do in life is to distinguish between principles and preferences; and even if one holds principles very strongly, it is generally better to act up to them, and to trust to the effect of example, than to bump other people, as Dickens said, into paths of peace.

It is often said by people of this type that praise is unwholesome, and that in bringing up a child one must never commend it for any unselfishness or self-restraint or perseverance, because people ought not to get to depend upon praise. But, on the other hand, it may be said that a child who is always being scolded and never has the sense of its parents' or teachers' approval gets into a stupefied and disheartened condition and gives up the game in despair, because whatever it does it is sure to be put in the wrong. I found, in my twenty years' experi-

ence as a schoolmaster, that well-deserved praise was the most potent factor of improvement in the world; to neglect it is to throw away deliberately one of the strongest and most beautiful of natural and moral forces. . .

Well, we have drifted far enough away from the poor Aweto and its ruthless invader. It is a pity to run one's metaphor too hard; and it is a mistake, I think, to draw analogies too freely between natural processes and moral processes. The essence of the natural process is its inevitability and its inflexibility. No species of education could be devised for the Aweto which could lead it to exercise a wiser selection of food; while the essence of the moral process is that there is a faculty of choice, limited no doubt by circumstance and heredity, but still undoubtedly there. But the poor Aweto is a parable, for all that, of many sad things which happen about us day by day; while if we choose to invert the image, and to consider the question from the point of view of the rush, we may consider the Aweto to be the type of a fine kind of unselfishness which gives itself up without calculation or reluctance, and lays down its life that some root of beauty may send a growing head of greenness and freshness into sunshine and air.

## THE OLD FAMILY NURSE

BETH, as we called her, and as her name is written in many hearts, was born in 1818. She had a little simple teaching at a dame's school; the small children were taught to spell and read; the elder girls sewed and read aloud. She was very happy at school, she used to say; but where was Beth not happy? It was a slender outfit, but it was enough for all she had to do.

When she was sixteen, in 1834, she went to be nursemaid in the family of my grandfather, the Rev. William Sidgwick, Headmaster of Skipton Grammar School. He was a delicate man and died young; my grandmother was left a widow with six little children, of whom two died in infancy, and eventually settled at Rugby. Beth brought them all up—William Sidgwick, formerly tutor of Merton; Henry Sidgwick, the Cambridge Professor; Arthur Sidgwick, the Rugby master, afterwards tutor of Corpus College, Oxford; and my mother. My father went to Rugby as a master in 1852, and lived with the Sidgwicks, who were his cousins; he married in 1859, and went to Wellington College as Head-

master; Beth came on there as nurse in 1860, and brought up all of us, going on with us to Lincoln and Truro, and coming on to Lambeth as housekeeper. Since my father's death she had lived on with my mother, full of activity and energy till she had passed her ninetieth year. In the last eighteen months she was confined to bed and sofa. Even so her illness was not unhappy; she could enjoy reading and talk, and welcome with smiles her many visitors. On May 5, 1911, she just breathed away her life, dying like a tired child.

Thus she had been nearly seventy-seven years in one family, and wholly identified with its interests and affections. Her room was a little gallery of pictures and photographs, the many scenes of her long life, and the faces of those whom she had tended and loved. There seems hardly any affection that is closer than that, with no tie of blood behind it, but yet having shared every experience and association, every sorrow and joy with us; everything told to her, everything confided to her, her whole heart and memory a mine rich in the secrets of love and life.

She was a slight, spare Yorkshire woman, with the perfect health that comes of a strong constitution and a mind always occupied with the thought of other people. She had severe illnesses in her later years, but rallied from them. Her face, strong and expressive, and with a touch of austerity, even severity as I first knew it, had

softened into one of the sweetest and most radiant of expressions I ever saw, full of tranquil goodwill; and in her later years, free from nursery responsibilities, she had developed a gaiety and a childlike zest in the little incidents of life that was even surprising. She loved to be made fun of, and to have her old strictness recognised, and she was full of shrewd repartees and homely epigrams. She had a very shrewd and even stern judgment of character, but for those whom she loved she had a perfectly uncritical and unquestioning affection. She kept her opinions of people to herself, unless there was need to speak; and even so she was always on the side of example rather than precept. Her displeasure, in nursery days, was very slow in coming, and silent and sorrowful when it came; but if Beth had reason to feel ashamed at something one had done or said, there was nothing that one would not attempt to regain her good opinion. She never scolded, never interfered; she hardly ever even played with us; sometimes she could be persuaded to tell a little story, but it was always of real life. She was always at work for us, always ready to provide anything for us, or to clear anything away, stopping the nursery racket, if it became unbearable, by a word, and never severe except to unkindness or quarrelsomeness; she never lectured or indulged in moral reflections; she made us many presents, and loved giving pleasure more than anything else in the

world; she made no parade of her qualities, and, indeed, never compared herself with any one. It was, I think, inconceivable to her that any one should be selfish or dishonest or unkind. She enjoyed her work, and she never seemed tired or fretted; neither was she ever unemployed. Her work done, in the later years, she would trot about the house, look after the clothes of any of her children who happened to be at home; and if something was lacking, it would be found that Beth had as often as not supplied it out of her own pocket. So it went on day after day, the same perfectly faithful, unobtrusive service, never claiming the least gratitude or honour—just glad to be with those she loved, and happy to spend herself, her time and thought, in tending and pleasing them.

She had a great natural dignity of manner and speech; she was just as much at home in the big households of Lambeth and Addington as she had been in the old, simple days, and she was regarded by every one with natural affection and respect. She was brought into contact with many distinguished people, and behaved to them all with a perfectly unaffected directness and courtesy. She received Queen Victoria in the Wellington College nursery, and answered her kind questions with simple straightforwardness, giving her the title of "My Majesty"; and in later years she would do the honours of her little room to a bishop or a dean with the same perfect

sweetness and naturalness, taking people as they were, and not as they were called. She never claimed the time or the attention of any one. If one was at home, she would come in just for a word and a look to satisfy herself that the nursling had returned to the nest. She said good-bye with tears, and my last vision of home for many years, on departure to work, has been the sight of Beth waving her handkerchief at the little casement of her room, to return to her work with a thought of love and sorrowful farewell. When, after my father's death, we were all for a time dispersed, she was staying with her Yorkshire relations, suffering much from home-sickness and the absence of dear faces, and hearing that my youngest brother was to pass through town on his way to his curacy, she came up alone to a London terminus, just to get a sight of him, had a few half-tearful, half-joyful words with him, and gallantly returned.

The wonder of it all! Fresh as I am from a sense of her loss, and with the thought of all the old days of tendance and affection breaking on the mind in waves of memory, I do not want to exaggerate or to say more than I believe; but it does seem to me one of the most perfect lives that could be lived, in its humility, its sweetness, its devotion, its dutifulness, and in its abounding love. The materials so simple, the outfit so slight, the worth of it so pure and true. There is something amazing about the entire absence

of personal claim, the generosity, the fulness of it all. She was one of the few people I have ever known who really found it more blessed to give than to receive, who only asked of life that she might work, and love, and be loved.

It was all so fine in its quality; her clear judgment, her love of beautiful things, her splendid sense and calmness, her perfect helpfulness in sorrow or trouble, the utter absence of any morbidity or self-pity, of any reference to her own rights or needs. She did not draw a line round her work, or claim any leisure or ease; she simply never thought about herself at all; if there was work to be done, she enjoyed doing it; if there was time disengaged, there was some one whom she could please; and her simplicity about it all was not the effort of a sincere nature striving against complacency; it was simply the instinctive gratitude for life, its homely duties and its dear cares. It was not as if she had not tastes and preferences; she loved travelling, and was transported by scenery. She came with us more than once to Switzerland, and on first catching sight of snow-mountains, "Is it seen with the eye?" she said. She loved, too, the beauty of words, enjoyed poetry and good books; and the only difficulty in reading to her in later life was that she could not bear to hear of anything unkind or unhappy.

I do not know what her religious faith was; she could not have explained it; but she knew



the meaning of the large words of life—pardon, love, and peace—and she lived so entirely in the spirit of Christ that she had little need to think about points of doctrine. The last things she cared to hear were simple old hymns, which she repeated softly to herself with the reader, till the day when my mother said to her, “You are sleepy, Beth; you would like to go to sleep?” “Yes, to sleep, and to forget everything!” with a tired smile.

Well, it is all over and done, and the worn-out body sleeps in a little Sussex churchyard. I shall never see her again, slipping lightly down to greet me, as the wheels grated on the gravel, or see her waving farewell through her tears. But neither can I think of her as at rest. Even when the body that had toiled so faithfully gave way at last, the mind and the spirit, the desire to serve and love, were just as strong and fresh as ever. The dear hands, once so worn with work, grew soft and white in those last months, and she would look wonderingly at them, as if surprised at their lack of strength and use; but one feels of a spirit like hers that it must pass refreshed and renewed to some further heavenly service. If there are souls to serve and love, Beth will somehow find them out to tend and comfort them!

..... And how such a life puts to shame one's designs and hopes and ambitions and claims! It teaches one how entirely happy life could be, lived on the simplest lines, if only one cared for

others rather than for oneself, and took a natural joy in work, instead of thinking of it as something troublesome and tedious, to be discharged and put aside; and it shows one, too, how the personal relation, the brimming-over tenderness, the absorption in others, is what matters most of all, and survives when all other hopes and desires decay. It is surely the one thing that does matter. If all enjoyed work and lived for love, like Beth, the world would be a simple and a happy place. She never resisted sorrow, nor repined at any loss or trouble; she did not dwell on her right to be happy. If others were suffering, she simply poured her healing love and care into the gap; and all this with no sense of rectitude, no rigid adherence to principle; her principles were, with her, what sustained life and conduct, not things to be used to correct and terrify others with—and the motive of all was love. One must believe that temperament has yet its varied work; but by seeing and feeling the beauty of such a life, in one's sorrow for the loss of it and one's gratitude for the gift of it, one may surely get a little closer to the truth.

She was the first human being of whose love I was directly conscious, and her tender care has enveloped my whole life, as boy and man; the beloved nurse, and the dearest friend I have ever known or shall know. I mean to be better, purer, and simpler for her life and example, and with a sure and certain hope of reunion. Her spirit

will find ours out, if she has to journey to meet us; and I feel of her something of what John Wesley said of his friend Whitefield, when he preached what seemed to be erroneous doctrine, and some poor, carping disciple said to Wesley, hoping for a grim answer: "Do you think, sir, that when we get to heaven we shall see Mr. Whitefield?" "I doubt, sir," said the old evangelist, "for he will be so near the throne, and we so far off, that we shall scarce get sight of him."

## THE ANGLICAN CLERGY

It is always, I think, amusing to be criticised as one of a class. When I read the other day, in a speech about the House of Lords—I forget whose, but I rather think it was one of Mr. Winston Churchill's conciliatory orations—that the only people who took an interest in the constitutional aspect of the question were university dons and the sort of people who read the *Spectator*, I was not displeased, because I knew that, though I was a don, I was singularly free from all the prejudices and foibles of the class. So I am not afraid of writing about the clergyman from the point of view of the layman, because I am sure that no one will feel personally aggrieved. It is not either as though I had anything at all satirical or wounding to say. I was brought up among the clergy, and I lived for a considerable part of my life in close touch with ecclesiastical circles. Some of my best and dearest friends are clergymen; and I think I may fairly claim to have known a great number of clergy and a great variety of clergy. As a school-master and as a don I lived mainly among lay-

men; but a man is not easily detached from his class, and to this day my heart, like Wordsworth's, rather leaps up when I behold a clergyman. I like what I may call clerical shop; I enjoy talk about clerical costume, church music and furniture, ecclesiastical politics and promotions. I am a connoisseur of clerical humour, which is often very good of its kind—a mild, dry beverage, with a delicate ethical flavour, and with a lambent irony that plays innocuously about archdeacons and rural deans. But it requires, as Mr. Shorthouse once wrote about the High Anglican position, an initiation to comprehend; and one must be bred up in it to realise its peculiar and pleasant characteristics.

I am often surprised at the view which what I may call men of the world are apt to take about our clergy. They look upon them as rather feminine, narrow-minded, officious men, with poky interests and fussy tendencies. Some go further, and allow themselves to think and speak of the clergy as men with whom insincerity has become a second nature, as people who are in the unhappy position of having to preach and accept doctrines and modes of thought in which they do not really believe. The other day I had occasion to remonstrate with an academical friend who talked in this vein. I was compelled at last to say that the only possible explanation of his talk was that he simply did not know any of the clergy well enough to form an opinion. The

outside opinion of a class is almost always a belated one, and is generally true of the worst specimens of the class as it was about forty years before; and it is true to say that a very great change has passed over the three professional classes with which I am best acquainted—clergy, schoolmasters, and dons. The fact is that they have all three become very much less professional than they were. The clergy have no desire to take a superior line or to improve the occasion, the don does not in the least desire to deride the ignorance of others, nor does the schoolmaster thirst to impart elementary information. The clergy have become a part of the national life in the last thirty or forty years to a marked extent. In novels, in comic papers, on the stage, a certain amount of mild fun is poked at them, but the frequency of their appearance is a very clear proof that they are a real social factor. The fact is that the sense of responsibility has enormously increased among the clergy, and with it their influence and status. I believe that they wield great and increasing power, and do so with wonderful modesty and moderation. There are constant complaints about the dearth of clergy. That is the inevitable result of a very real and deep improvement in the standard of character and the sense of vocation. I was constantly surprised when I was a master at Eton by the way in which parents used to express a hope and a desire that their sons might take orders; but a

boy was never briskly consigned, so to speak, to the clerical profession; it was always understood that no sort of pressure was to be applied.

Then, too, there is the organisation of clerical training, which in the last forty years has turned what was often a very amateurish business into a real and sensible specialism. There is no sort of doubt that the clergy are infinitely better equipped for their work than they were.

Now the result of all this is that when one encounters, say as a stranger in a strange place, a clergyman, what does one expect to find? I will say frankly what I expect to find, and generally do find. I find first a man of real courtesy, kindness, and consideration, surely the best note of the pastor. I want to emphasise this point because it is true and important. I am astonished at the unfailing courtesy of the clergy whenever and in whatever capacity one meets them. They have not a monopoly of this, of course; but while the ordinary English layman is a pleasant, bluff, sensible person, he often gives you the feeling of a certain aloofness, and shows that he is not particularly interested in your affairs. But the kindness of the clergy is a real and eager kindness, a desire to be personally pleasant and useful and companionable; it is not an obtrusive courtesy or a desire for mutual recognition; it is the benevolence of a man who thinks it is his business to help and serve, and who does it with all his heart. The exceptions

to this are so rare as to be negligible; and I think that it is perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of the clergy. No matter how petty or tiresome one's requisitions may be, one finds a clergyman always ready and anxious to do whatever he can. And I think they add to this another high quality, and that is the virtue of common sense. I am going to make one exception to this later on, but as a rule I am struck with the shrewd and tolerant judgment they display of men and things, and the real knowledge that many of them have of human nature. This is a thing which can only come by experience, and it is in itself a strong testimony to their quiet and laborious work among human beings. And further, I am sure that they are distinguished, as a rule, by what I can only call conspicuous good breeding. They get this from having to mix on intimate terms with all sorts of people, high and low; and our clergy are accordingly both well-mannered, in the best sense, and unaffected. They do not vary their manner with reference to social position; they are respectful, genial, and simple with all alike. Of course, there are individuals who may fail in these qualities. But I am sure that any one who has seen a large variety of parsons will agree with me that what I have said is in no way excessive.

Now, having said thus much in grateful and sincere recognition of the merits of our clergy, may I add a few small criticisms? I think that



the clergy do not do themselves full justice in two points. The first point is a complicated and difficult one; it is that they display a certain timidity of mind in the discussion of religious questions. There is no doubt that religious opinion among the laity, at all events, is advancing very rapidly upon more or less liberal lines. There is an amusing story which may illustrate my point. It is said that when a certain Bible dictionary was being compiled, the editor asked a prominent ecclesiastic for an article on the Deluge. It was rather late in arriving, and when it came the editor found that it was too advanced and heterodox for his purpose. So to gain time he put under the word "Deluge" the reference "*see Flood*," and hastily requisitioned another article from another contributor. But when that arrived, it seemed also too liberal in its tendencies; so he put "*Flood, see Noah*," and took time to consider. But when he reached "*Noah*" he found that public opinion had changed, and that the original article on the Deluge was now orthodox enough, and inserted it accordingly.

The clergy are so anxious—and, indeed, it is their business—to conciliate all shades of opinion, and so desirous not to offend the most scrupulous of consciences, that they give the impression, I often think, of being more retrograde than they are. I do not know how this difficulty is to be met; I suppose it will cure itself. But the result is that, instead of the clergy taking

the lead in religious thought, and giving the kind of guidance that thinking people require, they frighten people into silence by an appearance of antiquated reserve on vexed questions. I am not speaking about the essential and fundamental doctrines of Christianity, but upon the large fringe of accessory points which surrounds the central truths; and thus a thoughtful layman, instead of feeling that a clergyman is the right person with whom he can discuss religious problems, thinks of him as a person who is easily shocked, as a man who cannot face the development of Christian thought.

And then, too, I am sure that the clergy lose ground by being too much in earnest about what a rude layman would call millinery. The development of Church ceremonial and tradition is in its way a beautiful and attractive thing, but if it is too prominent in a clergyman's mind, it develops a sort of impatience in the lay mind. It is rather easy for a clergyman to deceive himself in the matter; for there are in every congregation a certain number of people whose interest in such things is sincere and genuine; but they are not always the most robust of the flock; and if a clergyman allows himself to pay undue attention to these matters, he is in danger of forfeiting masculine allegiance. Most people like the service of the sanctuary to be solemn and dignified; but the ordinary Englishman does not care for what is symbolical—my father used to

say that even the Baptismal Service was too dramatic for a certain type of British mind; and if a clergyman allows his interest in such matters to become too pronounced, he will have to part company with what is perhaps the most vigorous section of his flock. And in this connection may I mention a small point which I think is sincerely to be deplored, and that is the unhappy intonation, which is supposed to be devotional, but which is often both slovenly and pietistic, which is too common in our churches, especially in the reading of Scripture. No one desires reading to be melodramatic; but I declare that I heard the other day one of the most flagrant and brutal passages of the Old Testament, the death of Jezebel, which is a piece of desperate and hideous tragedy, read in church as though it were the amiable musings of some contemplative hermit. This does give a layman a sense of unreality and absurdity combined; and instruction in restrained dramatic elocution should be a part of every theological course.

I do not say these things in at all a captious or ungracious spirit. I think that they are points deserving of serious consideration. I will only repeat what I believe to be the simple truth, that we have in the Anglican Church a body of men who in social standing, devotion, and true pastoral virtue are incomparably higher and finer than the clergy of any other communion. They have won, under severe criticism and even disdain

—the shadow of the old dreary and sleepy Erastian times—the respect and affection and trust of their countrymen. For a paltry wage, in a career which gives but small opportunity to worldly ambition, they live uprightly and purely and beneficently; and their children—I say this from personal experience of them at school and college—are some of the wholesomest and simplest specimens of English growth. I look with dread upon any legislation which would in any way imperil the energy and efficiency of a class whose services and labours are of incalculable benefit to the nation.

## COMPULSORY GREEK

THERE has been another controversy in the *Times* on the subject of Compulsory Greek. The defence has been mainly conducted by Professor Murray, who has perhaps done as much to interpret the Greek spirit as any other living Briton. Professor Turner, the great astronomer, leads the attack, and Sir Edwin Ray Lankester, the eminent scientist, has dealt some shrewd blows. The gist of the controversy is this: that Oxford and Cambridge, alone of our universities, make it practically impossible for any one to enter without a modicum of Greek. It is not seriously contended that this amount of Greek does the possessor of it any particular good; it certainly is not enough to enable him to have any very intimate perception of Greek literature and Greek thought. One hears of the most grotesque devices being resorted to in order to creep through the fence. The other day a young friend of mine, who is a promising engineer, wishing to enter at Cambridge, and knowing no Greek, learned by heart the English translation of a Greek play, trusting to knowing just enough of the language

to be able in the examination to write down the correct passage. No one can pretend that such a process is anything but an irritating interruption to his real work. But the grounds on which this regulation is defended are the following. It is alleged that if Greek is not kept compulsory at some universities, the study of it will perish, because there will not be enough boys learning it at smaller schools to have a Greek master; and it is further alleged that universities which desire that their studies should be, in a general way, of a literary type, should do all they can to preserve the study of what is undoubtedly the finest flower of culture in the world; and the defenders of Greek go on to urge that if students of science are allowed to specialise entirely in science, their mind loses its intellectual balance, and becomes narrow and one-sided.

I am myself wholly of opinion that it would be a great misfortune if the study of Greek were abandoned; and I think it is perfectly true that specialism in science is a dangerous thing; it is important, on many grounds, that men of science should possess some literary culture; but I am equally sure that the retention of compulsory Greek under present conditions is a hindrance rather than a help to the advanced study of the language; while for scientific students compulsory Greek not only does not give literary culture, but actually consumes the time which might be given to it, because Greek, learnt as it is, does

not present itself to the average boyish mind as literature at all.

Then there comes the case of the ordinary passman. Now here, I think, it is a great misfortune that the defence of Greek is as a rule conducted by literary giants, so to speak; men to whom Greek never presented any intellectual difficulty, and to whom the beauty of Greek literature appealed from the very first. These defenders of Greek are perfectly sincere; they cannot understand how anything which seems to them so perfectly and entirely majestic and beautiful as Greek literature should not have a beneficial effect upon the minds of those who have to learn it.

Personally, I approach the subject from a different point of view. As an old schoolmaster I taught, first and last, at Eton, about two thousand boys, of all ages and attainments. And I unhesitatingly declare that the number of boys to whom Greek appealed as literature was a very small percentage indeed. I am quite sure that the hours devoted to classics—by far the larger share of the hours of work—were not only wasted hours, which might have been given to stimulating and intelligible work, but worse than wasted, because they taught boys to dislike and to despise intellectual pursuits altogether. The average boy at the end of an elaborate classical education is often in the miserable position of knowing no classics, and not having had the time

to learn anything else. Nowadays, when competition is so severe, an education which does not put a boy in a position to earn his living is not only a wasted education—it is a fraud! And too many boys find themselves stranded on this account. A boy who knows French and German, can calculate correctly, can express himself in English, and can write a good hand, is in a position to earn his living; there is plenty of time to teach him these things, and to give him, as well, some elementary science, some history and geography, and some sound religious teaching. But there is not time for all these things and for the classics as well. Moreover, a boy educated on modern lines would be capable of understanding what is going on in the world; and it is ridiculous to say that his intellectual interests could not be stimulated by the above programme. What does happen is that his intellectual interests are not stimulated by classics, and he is often rendered inefficient as well.

Moreover, such a boy ought not to be excluded from Oxford or Cambridge on the grounds of an ignorance of classics. There are many reasons—social reasons, reasons of tradition and association—why parents who can afford it should send boys to Oxford and Cambridge. The two Universities have a special tone of their own, and a very fine tone. What I feel that the Universities ought to do is to offer as wide a choice as possible of alternative subjects, encourage all their



men to take up a congenial subject, and raise the standard of performance in these subjects. At present it is confessed that the intellectual standard demanded of the passmen is deplorably low; and why all this waste of power, this manufacture of inefficiency should be permitted, just because the abolition of compulsory Greek might possibly endanger the interests of one special subject, I cannot conceive. It seems to be a monopoly and a tyranny which ought to be resolutely resisted.

The other day an official high in the Civil Service said to me that he had a number of appointments to make. "I wanted," he said, "to secure public school and university men if I could, because the type is such a good one in every way, and I made special efforts to secure them. I interviewed a large number of candidates; the men of the kind I wanted were in general ways the best; but they simply were useless for my purpose. They could not, many of them, write a respectable hand; they could not express themselves in English, they could not calculate accurately, they knew no French and German, and they did not even know their classics." That seems to me a very deplorable indictment, but it is true. And the pity of it is that the machinery for producing good results is all there, but it is working on the wrong lines.

The defenders of compulsory Greek seem unaware how much conditions have altered in the last fifty years. The world has passed through

a period of immense expansion. An attempt has been made to meet this at schools by introducing new studies, but the effect of them has been nullified by trying to keep the classics as well. It has become a farce, and a dangerous farce; and it ought not to be allowed to continue.

I am glad to see that the pressure of public opinion is producing an effect. We have lately at Cambridge taken a step which reduces our position to an absurdity. We demand Greek for entrance to the University, but we do not require that a man shall do any more Greek when he has once entered. That is to say, we acquiesce in a boy's time being wasted at school in learning a subject which we do not insist on his continuing at the University. What then becomes of our ideal of culture, and of the necessity of putting men under the influence of Greek thought? Of course it is very difficult to break down a system which has been long in use; there is a conservative tendency in academical circles, and there are vested interests as well. But it is not good citizenship to let this block the way to a great and desirable reform.

I have often been amused in the course of the controversy to recall the three reasons, attributed I think to Dean Gaisford of Christ Church, for the study of Greek. The Dean is supposed to have said that the first reason was that a knowledge of Greek gave a man a proper degree of contempt for men of lesser acquirements. That

does not seem to me to be a spirit which it is desirable to cultivate, and in any case the pass-man's store of Greek is hardly an adequate basis for any form of intellectual pride. The second reason was that it enabled a man to study the words of our Saviour in the original tongue. I suppose that it is now generally admitted that our Lord probably spoke Aramaic, but in any case a man who was not impressed by the teaching of the Gospel in the English version could hardly be supposed to derive much additional benefit from studying the Greek Testament; though, of course, in any such reform as I have indicated, the interests of the theological faculty would be carefully safeguarded.

The third reason, and the most conclusive, was that it led to situations of emolument; so it does, no doubt, for the few who have the privilege of continuing to teach Greek. But for the ordinary man I would affirm that so far from compulsory Greek leading him to situations of emolument, it is the principal factor in our English education which leaves him at the threshold of life without a prospect of any situation at all.

## GAMBLING

I LISTENED the other day to an earnest and eloquent sermon against gambling and betting, which left an unsatisfactory impression on my mind. No one, of course, has any doubt that gambling is responsible for a great deal of crime and misery, and that it is in a large number of cases an entirely reprehensible and pernicious practice. But the difficulty about it is that it seems impossible to lay down absolutely cogent and conclusive moral reasons against it. The same is not the case with things like theft or cruelty, which can be condemned root and branch. No amount of sophistical argument could justify the theft of a threepenny-bit, or deliberate cruelty to the smallest and humblest of insects. But it would take a very stringent moralist to condemn a bet of sixpence between two millionaires as to the correctness of a disputed date, and few people would be found to condemn on moral grounds the playing of a rubber of whist by well-to-do people for penny points. It seems to be a question of degree and expediency, and possibly of example. The preacher said that one of the rea-

sons against betting was that it was not honest to take money that one had not earned. But this plea cannot be for an instant sustained, because it would do away with the possibility of accepting all gifts or legacies, or the increment of a fortunate investment; and are there any moralists so strict as to think themselves bound, if a perfectly *bona fide* investment turns out well, to pay the proceeds to the State, or to the company, or to devote it all to charitable uses? Moreover, what becomes of such a thing as a life-insurance? There is nothing which is considered to be more virtuous or prudent or well-regulated than for a young man to insure his life. Yet the transaction is nothing more nor less than a bet. If you insure your life, you are betting on your death, while the insurance company is betting on your life. If you die young, your wife and children have the benefit of a sum of money which has certainly not been earned, and which is paid by your fellow-insured who do not die.

If a man who can afford it bets, and does not bet beyond his means, on the ground that it amuses him, it is very difficult to say where the moral guilt comes in. No one could say that all money spent on amusement is misapplied. No one would say that it was morally wrong to keep a yacht, or to take a shooting, if you have the money to pay for it, and if you think the amusement worth the outlay. It is all, in a sense, a

waste of money, but it is the purest socialism, and socialism of an advanced type, to say that no one has a right to spend more than he requires for the bare necessities of life.

The mere fact that money should change hands is not in itself reprehensible, if both parties to the arrangement concur in the process. Of course, it is wrong if you lose money that you cannot pay, or money which ought to be devoted to reasonable thrift, or to the education of children; but this would apply to innumerable things, not in themselves wrong, but which become wrong simply by the force of circumstances. I knew a worthy little tradesman once who had a passion for buying books. The desire in itself was innocent enough, but he ruined himself and reduced his family to beggary by indulging his hobby; and it is difficult to see that he was less culpable than if he had brought about the same result by betting.

Then the preacher said that all gambling vitiated and weakened the moral fibre; but this again is not the case. It is perfectly true of people who succumb to the passion for gambling; but I have known many worthy men who have played whist for small points two or three times a week for the greater part of their lives, who have certainly exhibited no traces whatever of moral deterioration. I read, indeed, in a book the other day an eloquent plea put in the mouth of a betting agent to the effect that one ought not to

deny to poor people the only method they have of indulging the pleasures of imagination and hope! This, I think, is an entirely sophistical plea—there are few vices which one could not defend upon similar grounds; and it may be urged as a purely practical consideration, that healthy and well-balanced natures do not need that form of amusement, and that if a nature is not healthy and well-balanced, it is a dangerous pastime at best.

There is one perfectly reasonable argument which may be urged against the whole practice, and this is the enormous waste involved. If the end of all betting and gambling were that certain foolish persons had a little more money than they had earned, and certain other foolish persons a little less, it would not be so wasteful. But this is not the case. Out of the money that changes hands, a large class of persons—betting and gambling agents of all descriptions—are supported. Granted that the whole system is defensible on moral grounds, no doubt many of these people earn their money honestly and laboriously; but the class is an unnecessary one, to say the least. They produce nothing, they are supported at the expense of the community, and they live on money which many of the losers cannot spare.

And then there comes in the fact, which is the one strong and absolute argument against the whole thing: that betting and gambling are, as I have said, undoubtedly responsible for an im-

mense amount of wretchedness and privation, and even of crime. The passion for gambling is a vice which lays an irresistible grip upon people, and too often upon people who begin by thinking that it is in their power to stop whenever they choose. That, I think, is the consideration which ought to be invariably urged in the matter: that no one can possibly tell, until he has tried, whether he may not be liable to the contagion; and that if he once contracts it, it is well-nigh impossible to cure; and, therefore, it is a practice which all sensible and conscientious people who have the welfare of society at heart should set their faces against, and give no encouragement to, lest they cause their brethren to offend. It is not a practice against which, as I have said, obvious and conclusive moral reasons can be urged, and it damages the cause of those who disapprove of gambling to fulminate against it as though it were an utterly reprehensible and abominable thing. Such a course savours of fanaticism, and sets moderate people against a good cause. But the evil is so insidious, so far-reaching, so horribly destructive in its developments, that it must be met sensibly and tranquilly. It may be the only cure for excess that all moderate people should abstain; and in any case gambling is not a practice that can be included among normal, natural, and innocent pleasures. The State, by stopping lotteries and making betting with all who are under age a criminal offence,



has shown a sense of responsibility in the matter. Further than this it is doubtful whether, in these democratic days, it would be possible to go, for there is little doubt that one of the attractions of public athletic contests is the gambling that accompanies them; and whether a nation which indulges so largely as Englishmen do indulge in betting would consent to tie their hands in the matter is questionable. A serious politician with whom I was discussing the subject the other day said that, to his mind, one of the strong reasons for granting female suffrage was that he believed that far more stringent laws on the subject of gambling would result, because he said that women did not indulge in gambling, and were the part of the community that suffered most in consequence of it. I do not know that I should go as far as this; and it would, of course, be a far better solution if the evil could be cured by voluntary abstention rather than by legislation.

The preacher maintained that the nation at the present time showed grave signs of decadence and moral deterioration. That, I believe, to be wholly untrue. I think there is every reason to believe that, as a nation, we are more healthy, more vigorous, more sensible by far than we were a century ago. I do not believe that the increase of gambling is a sign of decadence, but a proof that the working-classes have more money and leisure than they used to have. One wishes, of course, that it did not manifest itself in that

particular way; but I am glad, on general grounds, that the democracy should realise that it has the right and the time to be amused. In any case, gambling cannot be suppressed by lecturing or scolding, or the expression of pious horror. That is only exorcising the evil spirit, and leaving its dwelling-place empty and garnished. The only way is to encourage a taste for better and more innocent pleasures, and thus the evil would insensibly disappear.

## HYMNS

I HAVE been reading the new Oxford Hymn-book, with more interest, it must be confessed, than satisfaction. The principle of the book has been to restore as far as possible the original readings. I say "as far as possible" because I have not tested more than a certain number of instances, but in all these cases the original has been restored.

Now this is a theory which it is very easy to justify in principle, but not so easy to carry out in practice. It may be asked, by those who defend the restoration of the original text, what right any one has to alter, without the express leave of the writer, the words of his hymns, and to print those hymns with the names of the authors appended, as their work, when in many cases the alterations are numerous and considerable. No one, it may be urged, would venture to treat any other form of literature in this fashion. Of course that argument at first sight appears to be unanswerable. But a good many considerations may be brought forward on the other side. If hymns were merely a form of

poetry, and if a hymn-book were only a sacred anthology for private reading, alterations are certainly not justified. But a hymn-book is a great deal more than that. It is a service-book; that is to say that, in the first place, hymns are to take their place in the worship of the Church, and to be sung to music; and in the second place, what is far more important, the worshippers are not merely required to study the thoughts and utterances of the writers, but to adopt them as their own. They are required to take the words on their own lips, to sing them in concert with others, and to use them as the expression of their own beliefs and emotions and aspirations.

This at once introduces a new feature into the case; one cannot only consider the rights, so to speak, of the original writers, but one has to consider the rights of the congregations who will have to use the words. Hymns, indeed, may be said to pass out of the possession of the writers, and to become the inheritance of the users.

Let us take a very simple case first. If a word were to acquire some horrible or even flippant association, it would be absurd to insist on its continued use in a hymn-book, if it were to pain or amuse the congregations that used it. It would surely be right to substitute a less offensive word. The use, for instance, of the word "bloody" in eighteenth-century hymns is a case in point. The word has acquired low and profane associations. It may be regretted, but it

is the fact. Surely no one would object to some innocuous word like "crimson" being substituted? Again, in *Rock of Ages* there occurs, in the original, the disagreeable expression: "When my eyestrings break in death," which is a touch of ghastly realism. The Oxford book restores this, but to my mind there is something pedantic and even irritating in expecting people who have learned to love the simple and solemn alteration, "when my eyelids close in death," to substitute for it the earlier version; I would go further, and say that there is something really shocking in the idea of expecting a congregation of hundreds of persons to sing the dreadful words in public together.

It may freely be admitted that the compilers of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* went further than they need have done in altering hymns, and showed an unreasonable terror of expressions that were in the least degree quaint or unconventional. But the fact remains that *Hymns Ancient and Modern* has now been used for many years by thousands of worshippers, and that the very alterations are now invested with countless sacred and beautiful associations. It seems to me a harsh and even stupid thing deliberately to set aside and ignore that fact in the interest of what is only a piece of literary recension. The general and decided disapproval with which the latest revision of *Hymns Ancient and Modern* has been received ought to have been

a lesson to all revisers. In that last revision, certain familiar and favourite tunes which people had learned to love, and to connect with solemn and affecting occasions, were wantonly omitted, because they did not come up to the musical standard of a few purists. In matters which concern emotion, one cannot venture on such dictation; and to make strict taste the arbiter in a matter of the kind is a gross violation of a much more important kind of taste. The same principle applies to the words of hymns and songs which generations of men and women have learned to love. It is the emotion they evoke that matters, not the literary quality of them. Hymns and tunes alike become a national possession, and one may no more eject them from manuals meant for general use, on grounds of strict taste, than one might cast out monuments from Westminster Abbey because they were not in consonance with the Gothic design.

Now let me quote a few examples, taken quite at random. In Charles Wesley's hymn, "Hark! the herald angels sing, Glory to the new-born King," the original ran:

"Hark how all the welkin rings  
Glory to the King of Kings."

There was possibly no need to alter this, though the word "welkin" is not in use, and it is a pity to have to use, in a hymn for a universal

festival, a word which has no associations. Moreover, the word "welkin" has not in itself a very dignified or harmonious sound. But the alterations are quite innocuous—indeed beautiful. And further they are old alterations, only fourteen years subsequent in date to the original. If the original had been the altered form, the suggestion to substitute "Hark how all the welkin rings" for "Hark! the herald angels sing" would have been received with indignation and derision. And since generations have grown up with some of its brightest and happiest associations connected with the later form, it seems to me injurious to insist on restoration, like cutting down a beautiful creeper to show an old wall. It is so strange that people do not understand that accretions and associations form half the beauty of an ancient thing, whatever it be, a poem in words or a poem in stone.

Again, in Milman's hymn for Palm Sunday, "Ride on, ride on in majesty," one of the original lines was "Thine humble beast pursues his road." It is a poor and undignified line. "Humble beast" suggests "humble vehicle," and the paraphrase for an ass is essentially a journalist device. A reviser very sensibly substituted:

"O Saviour meek, pursue Thy road,"

which is a very unexceptionable alteration, and may well be left in possession.

In the old hymn (1565) "O Lord, turn not thy face [away] from me," the second line, as revised in 1708, runs "who lie in woeful state"—not a very effective line, but quite in keeping with the archaic character of the hymn. But the Oxford revisers must needs restore the original line, "From him that lieth prostrate," which from a musical point of view is most objectionable, as it involves an ugly slur on "lieth" and a shifting of accent on "prostrate," which is now accented on the first syllable. But worse than this. There was a stanza most judiciously omitted, containing the impossible line:

"I am sure Thou canst tell."

And this has been solemnly restored, though by any musical notation which throws the accents on to "am" and "Thou" the line becomes simply grotesque.

Again, in the hymn, "As now the sun's declining rays," the original ran:

"Lord, on the Cross Thine arms were stretched  
To draw us to the sky,"

which is both unpoetical and unreal. One cannot be drawn upwards by extended arms, but by hands extended downwards. The first revisers substituted the simple and beautiful line, "To draw Thy people nigh"; but this line, which is



an improvement from every point of view, and familiar as well, has been ejected for the sake of the unfortunate original.

In Ken's evening hymn, one of the original lines, in the stanza "Teach me to live," ran:

"To die, that this vile body may  
Rise glorious on the awful day."

"Vile body" is a false note, and a conventional phrase. The alteration:

"Teach me to die, that so I may"

is one of those simple alterations which improves the balance of the stanza, and which one cannot help fancying would have even commended itself to the author. Nothing whatever can be gained by restoring the original text, and no one can be either edified or pleased by the change.

Let me give one more instance. In Faber's beautiful hymn:

"O come and mourn with me awhile,"

the original second line was:

"See Mary calls us to His side."

This line might easily appear objectionable to congregations with certain traditions, and the alterations,

"O come ye to the Saviour's side,"

which is in itself more dignified and beautiful, as not in any way diverting the thought from the central idea, is a good one in every way.

Throughout the same hymn, Faber wrote in every case, "Jesus, our Love, is crucified." This refrain, though beautiful in itself, would not be, perhaps, acceptable to people not familiar with the tone of the ancient hymnology, and might seem to have a sentimental tinge, not in thought perhaps or contemplation, but when applied to a hymn for public worship. No objection could be raised to the substitution of "Jesus, our Lord," and the restoration of the original phrase is very questionable. Then, in the last stanza, the original hymn ran:

" A broken heart Love's cradle is;  
Jesus, our Love, is crucified."

This is a beautiful thought beautifully expressed; but the metaphor is not a simple one, while the expression may be held to be rather of a literary or poetical type, fit for reflection rather than ascription. It seems to me that the alteration:

" Lord Jesu, may we love and weep,  
Since Thou for us art crucified,"

is simpler and even more moving, and I can well understand that any one who had grown familiar with it would greatly resent the reintroduction of the original phrase.

It would be easy to multiply instances, but I have said enough to illustrate the principle I wish to enunciate, which is of a democratic and even socialistic type; that when the use of a thing is established, it cannot be tyrannously interfered with by privileged persons. We may regret the accident which led to an alteration becoming public property, but we can no more restore private rights than we can alienate a right-of-way. Hymns cannot be treated like ordinary literature, but have to be regarded as a little part of social life, in which custom and use justly override both literary and artistic canons. Thus we have to realise that while we may learn lessons from the past, and do our best to prevent mistakes in the future, we must accept the past, and profit by it as far as we can. We have to recognise, in dealing with hymns, that we are in the presence of the forces of tradition and association, which are stronger and more important than literary maxims, and questions of artistic propriety and impropriety.

## PREACHERS AND PREACHING

I REMEMBER reading a description of a famous preacher of the seventeenth century, whose sermons as a rule took an hour and a half to deliver, whose chief merit was that he kept the congregation in a perpetual "twitter," or, as we should say, in an agreeable condition of interested expectation; and I recollect, too, a caricature of a famous eighteenth-century preacher, who is represented craning out from his cushions, with his arms uplifted over a terror-stricken and gaping congregation, with the words, "Ye shall be slain, all the sort of you," issuing from his mouth. Underneath were the words: "Mr. — gives his congregation a good shaking over the pit." Perhaps the reason why sermons are not so much appreciated nowadays is that they are too polite, too amiable. They result neither in twitter nor in panic. I do not know that I should wish for the old methods back again, but I feel that the duty of boldly rebuking vice is not perhaps sufficiently kept in view. A friend of mine was once talking to an old family butler about a son of the house who had lately taken orders, and

gone to be a curate in a colliery village. The old man said: "Mr. Frank has got himself into sad trouble by preaching against drunkenness; now 'e should 'ave stuck to the doctrine, sir. That would 'ave done no 'arm!" Perhaps the great defect of sermons at the present day is that they are lacking in practical shrewdness, and aim at doing no harm. After all, it is easy to be critical, but the difficulties of the situation are great. As with services, the problem is not acute in urban districts. With a staff of clergy, and a large and possibly shifting congregation—many of whom are hardly known to each other—and, moreover, with the possibility of obtaining the help of neighbouring clergy, the difficulties are reduced to a minimum, though no doubt the difficulty of obtaining time for adequate preparation still remains. In a town parish there is, or need be, no lack of novelty—and familiarity is the fruitful mother of inattention—and, moreover, there are no social complications to fear. But in a country parish, where every one knows all about every one else's affairs, it is a serious thing to expect a man to deliver a discourse twice a Sunday, year in and year out, and to bring the Gospel home to his neighbours. It was easy enough for a man like Charles Kingsley, burning with zeal, brimming over with human interest, and with a perpetual flow of vigorous and racy language, to make truth vital and inspiring. But how is a man in a country parish, with no great

gift of speech, and perhaps no great knowledge of human nature, to be expected to deliver in the course of the year a number of discourses that would amount, if printed, to more than one bulky octavo volume, and yet to preserve any freshness of presentation, any moral or spiritual stimulus? The difficulty is increased by the fact that if he preaches directly and forcibly against some moral fault, he will be supposed to have some particular person in view; and the mischief is that he is sure to have some one in view, for where is he to make his sermons if not out of his own experience? The only way is to speak with tenderness as well as indignation, and without personal anger or bitterness—and this is not an easy matter.

I should like to make a few practical suggestions as to how the difficulty might be met. In the first place, I cannot see why the clergy should not at once be relieved from the duty of preaching twice on a Sunday. The sermons might be alternately in the morning and the evening. This would certainly be welcomed as a great relief by many of the clergy, and possibly even by some of the congregations; for I have observed that the highest praise that can be given by many laymen to a clergyman is that he preaches short sermons; and to have to listen Sunday after Sunday to a preacher whose eloquence one can neither stem nor controvert is a real trial in these restless days to the fidgety layman. But if this change

is impossible, I think it is a great pity that the morning sermon is not more often made a simple exposition of Scripture. I believe that if the clergy went quietly through the Bible, reading a good deal and expounding a little, saying just enough to make the circumstances clear and the narrative or the prophecy intelligible, it would be much welcomed by many congregations. The other sermon ought, I believe, to be entirely practical—an application of the principles of the Gospel to the thousand and one little problems of daily life. A man ought to speak plainly about grave faults, for people, even well-meaning people, get very drowsy over their faults, and very apt to draw their own picture with the lines and shadows left out; and he might speak, too, of such things as talk and reading, of punctuality and orderliness, of courtesy and good-humour, of sorrow and sickness, of money and work, and all the endless adventures and qualities that weave the web of life. Of course, it is difficult to speak of these things very strikingly and forcibly—but that is not needed; the point is to speak from experience, and not out of books. And it would be well, too, if the clergy practised more extempore preaching. The spoken word, however halting and imperfect, has a power that no written discourse ever has.

I believe that one way in which matters of conduct might be brought home to people without giving personal offence—which is a very real

danger in little societies—would be by using biographical materials.

I have heard of late a good many sermons in out-of-the-way places, and I must frankly confess that on the whole I have wondered to find them as good as they are, considering all the difficulties; for no doubt the attitude of the ordinary layman in the matter is both captious and exacting. He is apt to expect a mild, conventional, almost feminine, line from a clergyman. He grumbles at that; and when the clergy are vigorous and stimulating, he shakes his head and talks about Revivalism. There are faults on both sides, no doubt. But I have often thought that there can be few more disagreeable and humiliating things in the world, than for a clergyman who has spent time and trouble on a sermon, and who desires to bring home what he has to say to his flock, to see one or more of his hearers deliberately compose themselves to sleep before his eyes. I have felt sometimes that were I in the pulpit I should publicly remonstrate against such discourteous usage. Yet I have never heard an offender apologise for such a breach of decorum, except in a perfunctory way, as though the act was both natural and humorous.

My conclusion, then, would be this: If a man has the art of impressive statement, or if he has the subtler charm of originality which enables him to present old truths in a new and arresting light, the thing is easy; for it must not be for-



gotten that it is not enough for a pastor to warn and startle—he must also be able to attract and guide and build up; but if he has not this power, as long as he is sincerely and genuinely in earnest, and as long as he is content to try his best, carefully observing when he succeeds in commanding the attention of his hearers, and when he fails and why, he may sow the seed of truth. But perhaps the best consolation of all is that example is better than precept, and that work tells even more than words; so that the result may be, as Browning says:

“You are a sermon, though your sermon’s nought.”

It was to such a sermon that I once listened as an undergraduate—the fumbling utterance of a nervous but sincere preacher. Coming out, I said jocosely to a friend: “Do you feel the better for that?” “No,” he said gravely, looking at me; “I feel a great deal worse.” And then I was ashamed of my question, and knew that the preacher had not spoken in vain.

## ART AND LIFE

I HAVE an old friend who is a writer, I was going to say like myself, but I ought rather to say unlike myself. We often discuss the dreadful and delightful business of writing—dreadful or delightful according as you are rowing against the stream or with it. I do not mean that we discuss our tools and habits—whether we work with pen or pencil, sitting up at a table or sprawled in an arm-chair. But we discuss the craft, or rather the art, of it all. The conclusion which he always draws—perhaps I do not wholly agree with him—is that I am only a craftsman, while he is an artist; or, possibly, it is rather that I am an amateur, while he is a professional. He certainly tells me some very astonishing things—that he has an absolutely exact plan in his mind, for instance, before he begins to write, and that he knows to a page, and almost to a line, how much he is going to write. Now, I have a general scheme in my head, of course, but I never know till I actually write how long my sections are going to be. He derides me when I say this, and he asserts that it is like a sculptor saying

that he never knows till he begins a statue how big the limbs are going to be, and whether one of the legs is not going to be twice as long as the other. To that I reply that I am of the opinion of President Lincoln, when his Army Council was discussing the right proportions of a soldier. One of the party said, "How long ought a man's legs to be?" "If you ask my opinion," said Lincoln, "I believe they ought to be long enough to reach to the ground!"

Then he laughs, and tells me that this is the whole art of writing, to estimate one's material exactly and to use it all up; and that the words must follow the writer, not the writer the words. To which I reply that with me the thing, whatever it is, comes up like a flower, and makes its own structure; and then he says that I have no respect for form.

I have, as a matter of fact, a great respect for form. I think that everything depends upon how one says things. Writers are permanent or transitory in virtue of style, and style only. Great and deep thoughts confusedly or clumsily expressed have not a quarter of the chance of being read, or of lasting, as light and delicate thoughts beautifully and charmingly expressed. The thoughts of poets, for instance, are not only not, as a rule, new or intricate thoughts, but they are rather thoughts of which we say, when we read them embalmed in fine verse, "Yes, I have thought that vaguely a hundred times, but could

not put it into shape!" And the greatness of a writer depends almost entirely upon the extent to which he can make people recognise their own thoughts, and see in a flash how beautiful they are, when they have seemed homely and commonplace before. We most of us can recognise the beauty of a face or of a form, when we see it adorned and bravely apparelled. But the poet is the man who can see the beauty of the simplest folk through the stains of toil and the most workaday costume.

I suppose that I think more of the beauty of language than the proportions and balance of thought. And, indeed, a certain wildness and luxuriance of shape and outline is pleasant to me. If the form of a piece of writing is too apparent, it seems to me like a clipped yew tree. I had rather see a tree growing like a tree, than cut and carved into the shape of a peacock or a vase.

Our neighbours the French have got a much stronger sense of literary form than we in England have. But in their stories and novels, though I can often see a certain masterly handling of the form, I am often more oppressed than pleased by it. It seems to me that they lose the freedom and the naturalness of life thereby. Life and character do not conform to artistic proportions, and if one sits down to depict life and character in a book, one ought, I feel, to follow the natural laws of life and character. If the

book gives me the feeling of the author's controlling hand, then I begin to feel that it is a show of puppets which dance on wires tied to the showman's fingers. It is a pretty performance, and wonderful in a way; but I am not in search of that kind of wonder. It is the mystery, the inconsequence of life, that I admire, not the deftness of the performer's conjuring. And thus I like great loose, vivid books, like Tolstoy's novels, which give me no cramped feeling of form, but seem like the pageant of life itself. I do not want everything accounted for and wound neatly up. I want the thing to be as big, as ragged, as untidy as life itself, or at least to give me a sense of bigness and untidiness.

It seems to me that it is a very useless business making literary rules. These rules are, after all, only rules deduced from the work of great authors; and then a new author appears and knocks the old rules to pieces, and the critics set to work and make a new set of rules. Take the case of Ruskin. When he was writing his early books, full of close arguments and neat subdivisions, with here and there a burst of eloquence, flashing and curdling like a falling billow, he was doing excellent work no doubt. But those earlier books have not a quarter of the charm of *Fors Clavigera* or *Præterita*, where there is no sense of form at all, and which ebb and flow with a delicious and unconstrained beauty, like the actual thoughts of a man unfolding before one's

eyes. Of course, by that time, Ruskin was a great master of words; but the charm of the later books consists in their perfect vitality and reality. In *Fors Clavigera*, which must be the despair of artists, he set down just what came into his head, and as it came; and not only did he not know, when he sat down to write, the exact proportions of his chapter, he often did not know, I think, what he was going to say at all.

What I really believe makes the difference between artistic writers and natural writers is this. The artistic writer is thinking of his performance, of its gracefulness, its charm, its shape; and I think he must have in his mind the praise of the trained critic, though he obeys, no doubt, his own artistic conscience. A great writer who had a touch of cynicism about him said that the people who thought that authors wrote for the sake of applause made a great mistake—that what they wrote for was money, and that applause was only valuable because it showed that you might be going to take up a good collection.

There is truth in this, because, if the artist is thinking of his performance, then he is like any other professional—the pianist, the conjuror, the dancer—who is bound, above all things, to please; and he knows that too much originality is a dangerous thing, because people are more pleased by seeing and hearing what they expect to see and hear than by seeing or hearing something that they do not expect to see or hear. But

the other kind of writer is thinking more of what he is going to say, and the possible effect of it upon the minds and hearts of others. He has, of course, to study charm and impressiveness, but he does that, not for the sake of the charm or the impressiveness, but for the sake of the thoughts that he cannot withhold. Perhaps he has seen some delicious place, and wants to share his sense of its beauty with others; or some idea flashes into his mind which seems to link together a number of scattered thoughts and interpret them; and then he wishes others to have the same delight of intuition. Or else he suddenly finds, in the light of experience, that some hard, dry maxim is terribly or beautifully true after all, and he realises that the old proverb is not simply a dull statement, but a crystal shaped from a thousand human hopes and fears.

My own feeling about writing is that it is all a sharing of joy or sorrow with other hearts. Of course, if one were absolutely simple and unaffected, one could talk of such things to friends, or even to the people one meets in railway-carriages or on farm-roads. But they might not understand or care; or they might think me impertinent or crazy. And then their looks and remarks would disconcert me to such an extent that I should think myself crazy too. But one can put all the glory and wonder of these things, and, indeed, all the sorrow and bitterness too, into a book, and hope that it may fall into the

right hands. Though, of course, one runs the risk that it may fall into the wrong hands; and some reviewers may tell you their opinion, as many reviewers have told me at different times and with very varying degrees of courtesy, that I am a fool for my pains—and that I am quite prepared to believe. But such rebukes never disconcert a writer who believes in what he has to say and desires to say it, because he knows he cannot please everybody, and he simply perceives that the book has fallen into the wrong hands. I wrote a book the other day, and a reviewer in the *Guardian*, which is a very sensible and respectable paper, headed his review, "More about Mr. Benson's Soul," and said that it was a literary indecency and a literary crime, and an insult to my readers to write such books. Well, I am sorry that the reviewer should feel insulted. If I knew his name I would gladly express my regret. But he need read no more of my books, and I am afraid that I cannot pretend that I shall cease to write them. I wish, indeed, that he would tell me more about *his* soul, and then I might be persuaded to adopt his much higher ideal of literary decency. I might even think him reasonable, instead of thinking him, as I do now, rather elaborately rude. But I do not for a moment dispute his right to be rude, for I spoke first; and if one speaks in a book, there are sure to be ill-bred people within hearing!

But I fear I have gone all wrong about form



again! I am not using up my material properly, and the figure is all out of shape. What I was going to say is that what I myself value in a book more than anything else is a sense of vitality and reality. I like the feeling of contact with another human soul, and I even value this in the *Guardian* review, because the writer is certainly speaking his mind. But, of course, one likes one's company to be congenial, and the sort of soul that I like to feel myself in contact with is one who is full of the wonder and mystery of all life, even if it be a little oppressed and bewildered by it; one that desires beauty and gentleness and peace and order and labour and good-humour and sense to prevail. I do not care so much about being brought into contact with self-satisfied and confident people, who use the world as a kind of bath to splash about in, and scoff at the idea of not seizing and enjoying whatever one is bold enough or strong enough to take away from weaker or more timid persons. I have had a very fortunate life myself, and more prosperity than I have deserved, though I hope not at the expense of other people. But still I have been confronted, not once or twice, with very grim, severe, terrible, and sorrowful things, some of which have eventually done me good, but some of which have simply crushed and maimed me. I have not found any explanation of these things except in a faith that has learned, however faintly and tremblingly, to believe that the end

is not yet. And I have seen horrible calamities in others' lives of which there seems no reasonable or hopeful interpretation. And what I desire most of all is that men and women who have suffered themselves and have seen others suffer hopelessly, and who yet have found some great and beautiful explanation, should tell us what that explanation is.

Among such thoughts as these, no doubt one does grow careless, and culpably careless, of form and proportion, and all the other things on which the literary artist sets so much store. And there is no excuse for carelessness!

I was reading the other day a curious and interesting passage of Suetonius about the Emperor Nero. Nero was an artist at heart, who had, so far as we know, little power of expression, and was insane, too, with inherited insanity. We all know what a shipwreck he made of his own life and his empire alike. But in this passage we read how he had just been told of a great revolt in Gaul. He saw the artistic aspect of it all. He was sitting after dinner very comfortably with some of his abominable friends, and he said in a kind of ecstasy that he had made up his mind, and he was going out at once to the province; that the moment he got there he would go out unarmed between the opposing hosts, and do nothing but weep, and that the rebels would be so touched that they would at once submit; and that on the following day they would all

have a thanksgiving together, and sing an ode, which he would write—and that he would go away at once and write it.

I do not know that anything came of the project or of the ode; but that seems to me a magnificent instance of a person who cares more about the artistic part he was himself going to play than about the result he wanted to achieve. There is the danger of the artistic point of view; and though I enjoy fine craftsmanship with all my heart, and can be set all aglow by an ode, I do not want to think that this is the end of art. The thing must be said beautifully and impressively, because people will not listen if it is not. But the end of it is the criticism of life, the comparison of experience, and the sharing of joy.

## SYMPATHY

THERE is nothing that differentiates men and women more than the extent to which they need the sympathy of others, and the use which they make of it. With some people, under the shadow of loss, disaster, discredit, or illness, the sympathy of others sustains and consoles them, pours balm into the wound. But there are other spirits, not by any means necessarily more brave or self-sufficient, who do not under such circumstances either require or desire sympathy. Their one instinct, in the presence of a catastrophe which is irreparable, is to forget it as far as possible, to combat remorse and grief, not by facing the situation, but by distracting themselves from dwelling upon it, and by flinging themselves as far as possible into normal activities. Personally, I find that, if I am in trouble of any kind, the most helpful companions are not those who by word and look testify their sympathy. It is only an added burden of sorrow to think that one's own private cares are lying heavy on other hearts; while the sympathy one receives tends to turn one's thoughts upon the hurt, which is often

trying to heal in its own way. The most sustaining influence at such times is that of tranquil people, to whom one knows that one may appeal for practical help, if one requires it, but who will otherwise tacitly ignore the background of anxiety, and behave in a perfectly normal and natural manner. Because the best tonic of all is that one should try to behave normally too, and to act so that the shadow of one's own suffering should not rest upon other lives. Of course, there are times, in grief and anxiety and pain, when it is an immense comfort to be able to speak frankly of what is in one's mind. But one wants to choose one's own times of need for doing that, and not to be encouraged to do it to the detriment of the wholesome distractions which relieve the weight of care.

This difference comes out most strongly in the case of illness. There are some people who like to be inquired after, to detail their symptoms, to indulge their sense of discomfort. I do not think that this tendency is one that ought always to be repressed, because people of that type, if they are silenced, are apt to exaggerate their pains by solitary brooding. On the other hand, there are people who like to be told that they look well, when they are feeling ill, and on whom such a statement acts like a suggestion, restoring the hope and energy with which they battle with malaise.

Of course, there are times, as in the case of a

bereavement, when the danger is that men and women feel drearily and hopelessly the loneliness and isolation that the loss of a dear one brings; then undoubtedly the love that such a sorrow evokes and makes audible does flow with healing power into the gap. Those first days of grief, when the mourner, in the grey dawn, has to face the desolation and the silence, are very hard to bear without the tangible presence of human sympathy. But even thus sympathy should be as a medicine and not as a diet. As we are constituted, a burden must be borne alone; it cannot be shifted, it cannot be carried vicariously. The loss is there, and the duty of others is not to minimise that loss, but to keep clearly before the sufferer the fact that *all* is not lost; that there are other claims and duties, other hopes and joys felt, which no sorrow must be allowed to obliterate.

The difficulty, of course, both for the sufferer and for the friends who would help if they knew how, is to decide at what point the indulgence becomes unwholesome. To demand of a man or a woman that they should at once, after some devastating stroke or under a grievous anxiety, resume their place in the world and bear their accustomed burdens, is sometimes simply putting an additional strain on the wounded spirit. It is like insisting on a sprained limb being used too soon. I often think of the splendid words of Sir Andrew Barton in the old ballad:

“I’ll but lie down and bleed awhile,  
And then I’ll rise and fight again.”

The most that one’s best friends can do is to suggest and encourage a return to activity; they must know when to hold their hand. Instinct is a good guide up to a certain point. The wise physician, the perceptive friend must try to discern when the natural grief becomes a morbid indulgence.

I think that men are sometimes wiser than women at seeing when the ordinary activities ought to be resumed, perhaps because their sympathies are more limited. The heart of a woman goes out much more instinctively to anything that sorrows and suffers—indeed, the normal man tends, perhaps, rather to dislike and to shun the presence of anything maimed and broken. He will often be generous enough in cases where practical help can be given, but has not the instinct of *tending* to the same degree; and the sight of suffering often gives him a vague and helpless unhappiness, so that he longs to get out of an atmosphere which mars his own tranquillity without enabling him to be effective. Most men like to do their work in a half-humorous spirit, and humour is a quality which is apt to have an ugly and a cynical look in the presence of sorrow. But the woman

“whose instinct is to wreathe  
An arm round any suffering thing,”

is sometimes so solicitous, so pitiful, so unutterably tender-hearted, that the bracing element disappears. The fact is that we need both sympathy and firmness; and the difficulty is to know *when* we must rise to fight again.

The great truth which lies behind Christian Science is not the unreasonable attempt to treat the phenomena of grief and suffering as unreal, but the noble truth which underlies it that the victory remains with hope and joy. The spirit must fight suffering with its own weapons, and call the vigorous forces of life into play. Most of us, even in weakness and defeat, are capable of more endurance than we feel.

What is undoubtedly a far harder business for most of us is to sympathise generously and sincerely with joy and happiness and success. We are apt to feel that happiness is so delightful a thing that it needs no sympathy; and thus we often tend to spoil our friends' triumphs and joys by giving them but a brief and formal recognition, and turning to more congenial things. It is a great strain to some to live cheerfully with a very robust and cheerful person, especially if he demands an audience for his ecstasies. But to show sympathy with the joys of others, even if they need it less, is a very necessary piece of self-discipline. In reading the lives of great men, I do not think there emerges any quality quite so splendid as that of generous and ungrudging admiration for the successes of others. We most



of us, I suppose, in our hearts desire some sort of influence and power; it is wonderful what strange paths we choose to arrive at that goal! Many of us think that harsh and derisive criticism of the performances of others gives the hearers a sense of our own superiority; but even from the lowest motives of insincere diplomacy, many a man who gets nothing but discredit and dislike for his disapproval and depreciation of others' performances, could stride swiftly into influence by a royal distribution of applause. I do not, of course, mean that we should acquire a habit of bedaubing everything with disingenuous unctiousness; but, in criticism, there is very little to be said for ingenious fault-finding. Poor work in all departments finds its own level with wonderful rapidity; but we should be eager to recognise with ready impartiality and sincere approval any particle of pure gold.

But, of course, the real difficulty, as in all spiritual things, lies deeper yet. If a man has cause to recognise, by mistakes and failures, that he is cold and ungenerous by nature, what is he to do? It surely makes matters only worse to add hypocrisy to his other deficiencies? Is he daily to pretend to a generosity which he does not possess? Is he insincerely to praise what he sincerely despises?

Well, if a man could answer that question, he would hold the secret of life in his hand. The most one can say is that it is something to know

and recognise one's deficiencies, and still more to hate and mourn them. So we advance slowly; and, better still, there is an old-fashioned thing called the Grace of God, which we can, if we will try, admit to our narrow hearts, as the lake pours into the confined stream-channel. To do all we can, and yet not to feel that we have only ourselves to depend upon, that is the simple secret which has turned weak spirits before now into men valiant in fight.

## JEALOUSY

THE word jealousy is one that has changed its meaning in the last three hundred years. It has acquired an almost wholly evil sense, and is applied in most cases to matters of affection. If one describes a dog, for instance, as a jealous dog, one means that it resents any notice being taken of other dogs, and even dislikes seeing its master or mistress pay attention or give caresses to other human beings. If one says that a man or a woman is of a jealous nature, it would be understood to mean that they desired to concentrate the affections of their circle exclusively upon themselves. And it so undoubtedly now implies a mean, sinful, and undesirable quality that I have sometimes thought that it is almost a pity that it should be allowed to stand in Scripture as an epithet applied to God. In the Second Commandment, for instance, "For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God," the words refer to the Divine indignation against idolatry; and when Elijah uses the word of his own feeling against the worshippers of Baal, it is used with no sense of personal resentment. And it still can

be used in that particular sense, as when a man says that he is more jealous for some one else's honour than he is for his own. Still, it seems a pity that a word should stand as an epithet applied to God, when one would seldom apply such an epithet to another human being without the intention of implying censure on an odious and deplorable moral weakness. Of course it is always difficult to express Divine qualities except by transferring terms which represent human emotion; it may be said in this particular case that a simple explanation is all that is needed. But people who have become perfectly familiar with an expression do not always remember to furnish an explanation to those who are not so familiar with it; and the fact remains that one acquiesces in a word being applied to God in Scripture which one would rarely use of a man without suggesting that it represented a feeling of which he ought to be ashamed.

Jealousy is not one of the faults which are only the shadow of intelligence and reason; it is part of the animal inheritance of man. Faults such as untruthfulness, insincerity, irreverence, cynicism, are faults which come from the misuse of reason and imagination. But jealousy is simply a brutish fault, the selfish and spiteful dislike of seeing others enjoy what one would wish to enjoy oneself. It even goes deeper than that, and becomes, when deeply rooted, a mere dislike of seeing other people happy, even though

one is happy oneself. There are people who like to spoil the grace of a gift by giving it grudgingly and conditionally; and worse still, there are people who like, if they can, to throw cold water over the enjoyment of others, and belittle or explain away their successes. One of the most curious of well-known instances is the case of Mr. Barrett, the father of Mrs. Browning. He was a man who was passionately attached to his children; he desired their love to such an extent that he could not bear to see them care for any one else. He refused his consent to his daughters' marriages, on the ground that it was ungrateful of them to wish to leave him. When Mrs. Browning, knowing that it was impossible to hope that he would consent to her marriage with the poet, married him clandestinely, and went away to Italy, hoping that she might ultimately be forgiven, her father never opened any of her letters, refused ever to see her again, and kept to his word. It was an intense grief to Mrs. Browning, but she never took a morbid view of the situation, and realised with supreme good sense that no human being has the right to cripple another's life, and to deny another the paramount gift of wedded love. In Mr. Barrett's case jealousy almost amounted to a monomania, though we are perhaps too ready nowadays to excuse the desperate indulgence of some one pernicious fault in a character, otherwise sane and balanced enough, on the grounds of some mental or moral warp.

One may perhaps so excuse it, if one finds a man acting constantly in some misguided manner, not only in defiance of principle, but against his own better aims and wishes. But it never seems to have occurred to Mr. Barrett, that he was acting unworthily or unjustly, or that he ought to have regulated his conduct by the principles of ethics or religion.

When one sees jealousy manifested in the case of animals, it has its pathetic and even its beautiful side. Some friends of mine had an extraordinarily affectionate and devoted collie. One of the daughters was married, and when her first baby was born, she brought the child back to her parents' house on a visit. Poor Rover could not understand what had happened. A horrid little object, with no semblance of humanity, that could only sleep and squeak and bubble, that could not pat him, or walk with him, or throw sticks for him, had become the object of general attention and worship on the part of the whole household, previously so harmonious. The result was that after unavailing attempts to regain the affection he had somehow forfeited, after sitting hour by hour on the outskirts of the absorbed group wagging his tail, bringing sticks and envelopes, looking appealingly from one to the other, he despaired; and when at last the dreadful changeling was put down on a sofa, he went and bit its arm, not severely, but enough to show that he himself must not be entirely neglected. I am

thankful to say that my friends realised that they had sinned against constancy and affection; and instead of having Rover destroyed or given away, they recognised his claims to attention; and he lived long enough to be the pet and faithful companion of the once-detested infant.

But when the same sort of quality is indulged and encouraged by a reasonable human being, who is in a position to make his ill-temper felt by his circle, it becomes a very Satanic fault indeed. The worst of it is that it is a failing which often goes in the first place with a sensitive and deeply affectionate nature; and in the second place, it is a quality which friends and relations are apt to minister to, by giving way to it and by trying to remove occasions of offence; for the simple reason that the jealous person can often be so infinitely charming, when the fiend is not aroused, and can plunge a whole household into agitated depression, anxious conferences, and uncomfortable silences, if his suspicions are once kindled.

Our complacent indifference to, and even our unconfessed pleasure in, the lesser misfortunes of other people is a very dark and evil inheritance. The other day I was out walking on the outskirts of Cambridge, and a man just in front of me in the road had an accident with his bicycle; he tore his clothes, and he so dislocated his machine that portions of it projected in an absurd and grotesque manner. He was, moreover,

gifted by nature with a rueful and disconsolate visage. He wheeled his bicycle into the town, and I followed close behind him; for nearly half a mile I did not see a single person who observed him who did not undisguisedly smile or even laugh at the spectacle. Yet I have no doubt that most of those who saw it were naturally good-humoured and kindly people enough. They would have taken endless trouble to help the man if he had been seriously hurt. They saw well enough that he was uncomfortable and discomposed; that he had probably hurt himself, had incurred delay and possibly expense. They knew, no doubt, that they would themselves have greatly disliked, in a similar plight, being laughed at by every passer-by, and yet the instinct, combined with the absence of active imagination, was too strong, and the sight undoubtedly afforded them pleasure.

It is this fact which undoubtedly lies at the base of ordinary jealousy—the dreadful and humiliating fact that most of us are not genuinely pleased at the good fortune of others, or grieved at their calamities, but the other way. Of course, this does not hold true as a rule of one's innermost circle, because the sorrows of those very near to us, even if we do not love them particularly, are bound to overshadow us, or at least to inconvenience us; while if a golden shower falls upon them, a little of it is apt to splash over upon ourselves. I remember, indeed, when I was a boy, that I was told that one of my younger



brothers had been left a small fortune. It turned out afterwards not to be the case, as the legacy in question was shared between him and several others. But I recollect that my first feeling—and at the same time I must do myself the justice to say that I was ashamed of it—was not one of pleasure. The unregenerate heart's first thought is, "Why him and not me?" I do not think so ill of human nature as to say that we are most of us deliberately pleased to hear of a misfortune happening to an acquaintance, but the feelings which it arouses are not as a rule those of unmixed sorrow; even the best people have a comfortable sense of heightened security resulting from the news, or at least a sense of thankfulness that the misfortune has not befallen themselves. But to be whole-heartedly glad of the success or good fortune of an acquaintance is a sign of a really generous and kindly nature. We do most of us need to discipline ourselves in the matter, and we ought to encourage and nurture by every means in our power the sense of shame and self-contempt which, after all, we do feel on reflection at the thought of how little we are affected by pleasure at others' good fortune, or by sorrow at others' calamities. The apostolic command to rejoice with those that rejoice and to weep with those that weep is by no means a platitude, but a very real and needful counsel of Christian conduct.

Of course, the whole thing is largely a matter

of temperament; but it is a dangerous thing to excuse oneself by saying, "That is how I am made." The point is how to unmake oneself, how to change oneself!

A friend of mine told me that he once went to pay a call at the house of a well-known man. He found in the drawing-room his host's wife and her unmarried sister, who lived with them, both gifted, accomplished, and delightful women. They had a very interesting talk. Suddenly the front door opened and shut rather sharply below. A silence fell on the two charming ladies. Presently the sister-in-law excused herself and went out of the room. She came back a few moments later with rather an uneasy smile, and said in an undertone to the wife, "He says he won't have any tea. Perhaps you would just go down and see him." The wife went down, and remained away for some minutes. She came back and gave a little glance to her sister-in-law, who again slipped out of the room, and the conversation continued in rather a half-hearted manner. My friend decided that he had better go, and departed, aware that his departure was a relief. He said to me that it gave him a great sense of depression to think of the constant repetition of similar scenes. The husband was a man of moods, jealous, irritable, self-absorbed, and the sense of his possible displeasure lay like a cloud in the background of the lives of these delightful women. He was apt to be vexed if things did not happen exactly as

he wished, while at the same time he was annoyed if any notice was taken of his moods, or if he thought he was being humoured and arranged for. What distresses one about such a case is the silly waste of happiness and peace that such a disposition can cause, in a circle where there are all the materials for the best kind of domestic content. Yet the case is not a very uncommon one, and the cause a mere lack of self-discipline.

The only hope for such temperaments is that they should become aware, early in life, of all the unhappiness they can create, and determine that, whatever they feel, they will behave with courtesy, justice, and kindness. The difficulty is that the most trivial incidents tend to confirm and increase such irritable suspicions, and there is, moreover, in jealous people, a sense of complacency in the thought of how much they can affect and influence the emotions of their circle. But such power is a very mean and selfish business. The worst of it is that it is perfectly possible for a man to despise and to condemn such conduct in others, and yet to do the very same thing himself and to justify it, not without a certain contemptible pride in his own superior sensitiveness.

## HOME TRUTHS

It is a question of great difficulty to what extent it is a privilege or a penalty of friendship to tell a friend of his faults. A great many people have one or more rather patent and obvious faults, not very serious perhaps—faults of temper, manner, demeanour, irritating tricks, disagreeable ways, tiresome economies, which cause friction and unpleasantness, quite out of proportion, it may be, to the motive or quality which lies behind them. I once knew a man, for instance, who resorted to the most transparent devices in order not to pay his share of a vehicle or a hotel reckoning. He was a wealthy man, and I suppose that the habit was rooted in a desire for economy; but I am sure that he did not know that it was observed or commented upon, and if he had realised what very disagreeable remarks were made on the subject by his acquaintances he would have taken very good care to amend matters. And again, there are little habits, like the use of certain scents, insufficient ablutions, the flourishing of tooth-picks, hawkings, and throat-clearings, which may grow by mere habit highly offensive to one's com-

panions. And then there is a whole range of faults of manner, roughnesses, rudenesses, contradictoriness, snappishness, domestic fault-finding conducted in public, personal preferences imposed upon guests—all the things which arise partly from want of observation, and partly from petty selfishness—things not very serious in themselves, but the removal of which would add immensely to the pleasantness and ease of life in the particular circle involved; and then, again, there are things like snobbishness, inquisitiveness, untrustworthiness, violations of privacy, blabbing of secrets, ostentation, censoriousness, which may not affect a man's virtue or honour, but which make other people uncomfortable or on their guard in his company.

The question is whether it is a plain duty for a friend to represent the facts, and to testify to the offender on such points if the offender is a friend. It is often quite clear that a man is unconscious of such faults. They have grown upon him in all probability from small beginnings; and if he is unsensitive and unobservant, he is probably wholly unaware of the prominence which they have assumed.

Now let me tell a simple story to illustrate what may happen in such a case. An acquaintance of mine developed a kind of curious grunting noise, which he interjected into all his remarks, and with which he punctuated all silences. It became both ludicrous and offensive.

His family circle debated the question, and it was at last decided that a near relative had better inform him of the fact. The relative did so. The offender was very much annoyed, volubly denied it, and added that he would desist from the practice. He did so for a short period, and then took to it again as badly as ever. He was thus in the position of believing that he had cured himself of a trick, and he never quite forgave the relative for his interference.

A friend of mine once developed a very ingenious scheme. He held that the need for people to be told of their faults was an urgent one, but that their friends could not be expected to do it. So he suggested that there should be a small Government department, with a staff of inspectors or Truth-tellers, to whom a report of the circumstances could be referred. If the report was adequately backed, and the office considered the case a suitable one, after the payment of certain fees, a Truth-teller would be sent down to the offender, to inform him without bias or animus, in a purely, judicial, and if possible, judicious way, of the fault. This system, my friend affirmed, would do more for household peace than much social legislation.

But, speaking seriously, the difficulty is great. Fortune sometimes sends one a direct opportunity. A friend may consult one in such a way that one's course is clear. A friend of my own did once ask my advice about a painful situation

in which he found himself, owing to his having given great offence to a relation of his own by his remarks upon a private incident. He asked me to tell him quite frankly and candidly whether he was to blame. The fault was in this case a fault of manner, arising from a habit he had formed of expressing himself with an extravagant vehemence and intemperance of comment which was often quite out of proportion to the cause. I did tell him quite plainly what I believed to be wrong; he was not only grateful, but the incident served to confirm and strengthen our friendship, while he contrived quite successfully to combat the tendency.

And then, occasionally, one is given an opportunity of saying the necessary truth in a moment of anger, justifiable or unjustifiable. There was an eminent judge, who had got into the habit, after a game of whist, of commenting very irritably and offensively on his partner's play. "Don't you see that if you had played the queen you would have had them at your mercy? It is simply incredible to me that you could throw away all our chances—oh, the tricks we have lost!" The man who effected the reformation was an unskilful player, and a quick-tempered person as well. At the conclusion of one of these tirades he said, "You seem to think, Sir, that you are still in your beastly old police-court!"

It was said with straightforward anger, and it is hard to say that the anger was not justifiable;

and I must add that I believe it was entirely effectual.

But this is, of course, a social matter. The thing is far harder when it is an ethical question. If one sees a man giving a wrong impression of himself, vitiating his own effectiveness, causing misunderstanding and ill-feeling, it does sometimes appear to be a duty for a friend to remonstrate. But one is obliged to look facts in the face, to remember that people are human, and that one must risk, if one does think it necessary to speak, not only a disagreeable interview, which it may be a duty to face, but what is a much more serious thing, losing a man's friendship and confidence. Of course, a man ought to regard a friend who has told him an unpleasant truth with increased affection and respect; but the flesh is weak, and it must be confessed that it is very hard to be at ease in the presence of a man who has unveiled to oneself a thoroughly disagreeable trait.

And thus the question resolves itself into this: Is one bound to risk losing a friendship for the sake of trying to effect a moral improvement in a friend? If one reads the Gospel, one finds there is a good deal about loving other people and supplying their needs, but there is very little indeed about the duty of finding fault or lecturing them or improving them. There is a blessing on the pure-hearted and on the peacemaker, there is no beatitude for the reprovcr and for



the rebuker. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the father is, of course, the hero of the story. It is a pity that the parable was ever called the Prodigal Son, because he is quite a subsidiary character, and his motives for repentance are frankly deplorable. But the father has not a word of blame for the sufferer: the poor wretch has been punished enough, and the father leaves it there; he does not rub in the heavy lessons of experience, or even express a hope of seeing a real amendment. Without blame, without question, without exhortation, he takes the unhappy creature back to his heart, and bids the minstrels do their best to cheer the simple feast. The only person who expresses perfectly just and natural indignation is the elder brother, and even for him, ungracious and detestable as he is, the father has no word of blame. He only begs him to banish all thoughts except a natural and kindly joy. The secret of the parable is that by loving people through thick and thin, if one can, the real victories are won; and that the only improvement, the only regeneration which is worth anything, comes that way. The fees of experience, as Stevenson says, are apt to be heavy—that cannot be avoided! If men will not hear Moses and the prophets, they will not listen even to one risen from the dead. Remorse and regret are the shadow of sin, but they have no healing power. The only restorative is to see the beauty and the happiness of unquestioning love; even the casting

out of evil is worse than useless, unless its place is supplied by a stronger and a sweeter force. It may not be the creed of the Puritan, but it is the creed of Christ—that nothing must stand in the way of love. The only thing that called forth Christ's bitter denunciation was the unloving rigidity of the self-righteous; and there can be no sort of doubt that an absolutely uncritical and unquestioning love is a far higher and more heavenly thing than any enforcement of moral standards, however lofty, if they are not rooted in love. Nothing can be done by mere disapproval; but the love that hopes and expects and believes that the thing, whatever it be, in each of us, that evolves love and is worthy of it will somehow triumph and prevail; that is what calls out effort and strength, and purifies while it uplifts, and because it uplifts.

## SUPERSTITION

I REMEMBER once as a boy—it must have been in the year 1879—sitting on the seat of a diligence which was scrambling along a high road in Normandy, through open agricultural country—wide fields and tree-embosomed farms, with here and there a clustered village of white houses. On the seat beside me sat Westcott, then a Cambridge Professor, who was taking his summer holiday with us, dressed in rough black, with an old soft wide-awake on his head, wrapped up in his invariable grey plaid shawl, and with the accustomed sketch-book in his hand. He sat silent, rather hunched up, his mouth compressed, his brows contracted, and with those wonderful expressive eyes of his looking fixedly at the moving landscape. Every now and then he raised his hat as if in salute. I watched him for a long time, and then ventured to ask him why he took off his hat so often. He gave a characteristic little start, smiled very intently, and then blushed. Then he said, “It’s those magpies!” The country, indeed, seemed full of them; three or four at a time would rise balancing and poising, and then sail off to the shelter of the nearest holt,

with long tails jauntily extended. Westcott, after a silence, added, "I got into a foolish habit, as a boy, of always raising my hat to a magpie, and I can't give it up. There's another!" and his hat went off again.

I have often recalled that pleasant scene, and the ingenuous shame with which the Professor confessed to the little superstitious reverence, which he could not justify or give up. Indeed, I admit that I never see magpies myself without repeating the old rhyme:

"One for sorrow,  
Two for mirth,  
Three for a death,  
Four for a birth;  
Five, you will shortly be  
In a great company."

The last two lines have a delicious sort of mystery about them. But I allow that I would always rather see two or four magpies together than one or three.

The odd thing about these little superstitions, and I suppose we have most of us got some two or three that we cherish, is that we regard, as a rule, the incidents which arouse them with a sense of momentary and even pleasurable excitement. It is very difficult to analyse the feeling. Do we regard the incidents as the *cause* of the disaster that is supposed to follow them, or merely as warnings of an impending misfortune

which we are powerless to avert? Some few superstitions have their antidote. If one spills salt, one may set all straight by throwing a pinch of the offending substance with the right hand over the left shoulder. I always do it myself! It is supposed, I fancy, that one's good and evil angels are constantly in attendance—the good angel on one's right, and the evil angel on one's left; and that by throwing the salt, the spilling of which has put one momentarily in the power of the evil influence, with the right hand over the left shoulder, one flings it in the eyes of the evil spirit. But as a rule there is, in the case of most superstitions, nothing so practical to be done. One can only sit and shudder, after breaking a mirror, or seeing the new moon through glass, till the impending stroke falls. Some superstitions, like walking under a ladder, I always set deliberately at defiance; but I suppose that the origin of that is simply precautionary, that one may not be struck by falling tiles? But no doubt the whole *raison d'être* of those old fears is that they date from a time when men believed that the world swarmed with unseen malicious spirits, who took advantage of any lapse to set upon the offender. The odd thing is that the offences seem such trivial and harmless things! If it were the commission of some deliberate sin that gave evil its opportunity, it would be more intelligible; but the things which incur the hostility and invite the assaults of these uncanny

powers seem to be so fortuitously and grotesquely selected.

Neither is it as if the only people who indulged in these superstitious fancies were anxious, weak-minded, and foolish persons. A strong vein of superstition is often found in connection with highly robust and reasonable temperaments. I have a near relation, one of the most healthy and sensible people in the world, who is the prey of many of these fancies. One winter evening he came into my room. I was writing by the light of three candles. He rushed at the table and carefully extinguished one. I remonstrated. "Well, I don't mind if you will only have *four*," he said, "but three—that's *most* unlucky!"

Another odd point is that the most superstitious people never think of investigating the subject carefully. If, whenever they violated one of their principles, they carefully noted down the results, whether disastrous or not, they could, one would think, either confirm or dispel the theory. But that they will not do. I pointed out once to a votary of the superstition about thirteen sitting down to a meal, that it was only a question of percentage, and that if it was true of thirteen, it must be still more true of fourteen or fifteen. She—it was a singularly lively and intelligent woman—said, "Oh! that is the tiresome habit you men have of *rationalising*! It is *not* true of fourteen, and I have proved it many times by asking in the Vicar to dine when I was threat-

ened with a party of thirteen—and nothing has ever happened.”

Two of the most curious instances in history of the superstitious temperament are those of Archbishop Laud and Dr. Johnson. Every one remembers Laud's dreams, such as the one where all his teeth fell out except one, which he “had much ado to hold in its place with both hands,” and how he prayed it might portend no evil. That is a good instance of confusing the cause and the sign. Either the dream caused the evil, in which case there was nothing to be done but to wait for the sequel; or else it was a kindly and a timely warning. But to pray that it might not portend evil shows a curious confusion of mind. Laud, too, was constantly on the lookout for warnings and prognostications in psalm and lesson; all of which things show that in spite of his activity and decisiveness and his disregard of others' feelings, he was of a nervous and anxious temperament. With Dr. Johnson the thing is not so strange, because underneath his robust humour and his supreme common-sense there lay a dark vein of hypochondria. Who can forget his anxious care to go out of doors with his right foot first, his touching of posts, his murmured prayers and ejaculations?

Of all the old superstitious stories, I think one of the most interesting is that told by Cicero, because it not only illustrates the habit of mind, but throws a curious sidelight upon the pro-

nunciation of Latin. He was at Brundisium, I think, about to start by sea for Greece. A vendor came along the quay, crying Caunean figs for sale. "Cauneas! Cauneas!" Of course, said Cicero, I decided at once not to go, and took measures accordingly. The fact is that Cauneas was the usual pronunciation—thus much is clear—of the Latin words, *Cave ne eas* ("Mind you don't go"). But the odd thing is that it does not seem to have occurred to Cicero to warn his fellow-passengers of the prognostication. He only considered it as a sign which he had been fortunate enough to be able to interpret. And this is very characteristic of the general attitude. Providence is regarded, not as a just dispenser of good and evil, but as powerless to avert a catastrophe, and only able to intimate to a favoured few, by very inadequate means, the disasters in store; and it is this that makes the whole thing into rather a degrading business, because it seems to imply that there is a whimsical and malicious spirit behind it all, that loves to disappoint and upset, and to play men ugly and uncomfortable tricks, like Caliban in Setebos,

"Loving not, hating not, just choosing so."

I suppose that the spread of education tends to sweep all this away; but more of the old feeling probably lingers in out-of-the-way places and dark corners of the country than it is pleasant



to admit. At Cerne Abbas, in Dorsetshire, there is a great figure, over 200 feet, I think, in length, traced in the turf of a chalk down, called the Man of Cerne. It represents a giant, holding in his hand a ragged club. It is of uncertain date, but it is certainly many years anterior to the Roman conquest of Britain. It is no doubt one of those figures of which Cæsar speaks, upon which captives, bound with osiers, were burned alive, with horrible rites. The monks tried to consecrate the religious awe investing the figure by rechristening it St. Augustine, and explaining the club as the representation of a fish, to show that he had crossed the sea—though why one should therefore land with a large John Dory in one's hand is not so clear! But there is no doubt that very ugly and vile superstitions did attach to the figure, and that most barbarous rites were practised there till a comparatively recent date. And it is certain that in remote parts of the country a good deal of the old black art prevailed till very recent times—if, indeed, it is altogether dead. One hears very well-authenticated stories of wax figures stuck with pins being found hidden in uncanny places within the last few years. How is one to banish these dismal traditions? It is hard to run them to earth at all; and no amount of intelligent argument will prevail over minds which have inherited an instinctive belief in such practices from long generations of ancestors.

But among educated people the whole thing is on a different footing. They regard superstitious beliefs and practices with an outspoken amusement, though there is also a vague sense in the background that there may be something in it after all, and that it is better to be on the safe side. My own feeling about such things is that the only rational motive for avoiding incidents, with which ill-omened consequences are connected, is that, if by some unhappy coincidence disasters *do* follow their occurrence, it is such a bad example for weak-minded people, whose belief in the inauspicious character of an event is far more surely confirmed by a single instance of disaster following it than by a hundred instances when no such disaster occurs. And yet by avoiding such incidents one seems tacitly to concur with those that "hold of superstitious vanities."

But we have still a few things to learn, a few steps to climb, and we cannot be too much in a hurry. It is a fault with benevolent and sensible people, who see clearly what the truth is, to be impatient if other people will not give up unreasonable ideas the moment that they are told what is true. It is the old contest between instinct and reason, and the victories are slow. But just as the wicked old baronial strongholds, which represented so much that was tyrannical and abominable, have now crumbled down into picturesque ruins, and make a goal for summer pilgrimages, so these old dark forces seem to be

transforming themselves into nothing worse than pretty and silly observances, about which it is difficult to believe, so harmless and interesting have they become, that men were ever really swayed and moved by them. There are such mysterious and terrible things in the world that it is easy enough to be bewildered; but there can be no reason why we should add to the burden, and torment ourselves by causeless and imaginary fears, only to combat them by grotesque and meaningless ceremonies.

## LETTER-WRITING

A HUNDRED years ago, I suppose that an Archbishop of Canterbury wrote possibly half a dozen letters a day, and perhaps not even every day. Nowadays, the correspondence of the Archbishop needs a staff of secretaries, and probably averages between forty and fifty letters a day all the year round. The facility of communication has two sides to it, and as my father used to say, "The penny post is one of the ordinances of man that we have to submit to for the Lord's sake." The result of all this multiplication of correspondence, combined with the fact that people move about much more, hold more interviews, and see more of each other, is that the old leisurely sort of letter-writing has, to a great extent, gone out. One can see this from modern biographies. Letters tend more and more to be business communications, and to deal with definite points. In days when postage was expensive, and when there was less going and coming, a letter was a friendly interchange of thought and news, and covered much of the ground that is now covered by talk. When Dr. Balston was headmaster of

Eton, he used to say that leave for boys to go home must only be granted if applied for by letter or personally, adding "A telegram is a hasty thing!" That is the characteristic which seems inseparable from modern civilisation—it is all a hasty thing. If one reads a book like Stanley's *Life of Arnold*, one realises how much more of himself a busy man like Arnold, with a great school on his hands and a big book on the stocks, contrived to put into his long and elaborate letters than a public man can afford to do nowadays. There may, of course, be leisurely people in secluded corners with a taste for expression, who are writing letters of the old humours and entertaining kind, with a literary flavour about them. But when one reads such letters as Lamb's or Byron's or FitzGerald's or Ruskin's, one cannot help feeling that the art has been or is being, killed by the conditions of modern life. It is not that the taste for expression has gone out, but what is written is written as a rule for publication; and there can be few people who do as J. A. Symonds used to do, when he wrote a letter of the elaborate kind—namely, copy it into a notebook with room for amplification and annotation! There are, indeed, stories which prove what a trouble letter-writing is to busy men. There was a well-known dignitary of the Church whose unanswered letters used to accumulate in such numbers that he was supposed at intervals to fill a portmanteau with them and take it abroad

with him. Somehow or other the portmanteau disappeared. It was darkly hinted that he had been seen with his own episcopal hands to tip it over the bulwarks of a steamer into the sea, and that a notice used afterwards to appear in the papers that his lordship had unfortunately lost a bag containing letters, and would be glad if those of his correspondents who had received no reply would communicate with him again. "By which time," the great man would say, with a humorous smile, "most of the letters in question had answered themselves."

I have myself very decided theories as to letter-writing and letter-answering. Somehow or other I contrive to have a very large correspondence. There are three or four institutions with which I am connected, which bring me a good many business communications. Then I have many letters from relations, friends, and old pupils; and, lastly, I receive a great many letters—it will hardly be credited how many—from unknown people all over the world about my books. The result of it all is that so large a part of every day is spent in writing letters, that it is the rarest thing in the world for me to find time to write a letter spontaneously. It is not that I dislike writing letters—rather the reverse; but it is so difficult in any one day to get to the bottom of the pile, that there simply is no opportunity to indulge in leisurely correspondence. I have a strong sense of conscience about answering letters

politely. Perhaps that is rather too dignified a term to use: but it is no more possible for me not to answer a civil letter than it would be possible for me, if a courteous stranger spoke to me in a hotel or a railway carriage, to turn my back and give no reply. The letters which reach me from unknown correspondents are decidedly interesting, kind, and often beautiful, sometimes extremely touching and pathetic; some writers tell me very curious things about themselves, and often give one a very surprising picture of life and thought; or they raise a point, or ask for an explanation. Then one receives controversial letters and severe letters; and occasionally very impertinent ones, though even these are often obviously dictated by a good motive. Another odd thing is the number of people who ask for copies of books. One would not write to a tailor or a shoemaker for a coat or a pair of boots, because one happened to like the style and appearance of their wares. But I suppose that people think that an author is supplied with any number of copies of his books gratis, and is only too glad to get them into circulation! Then there are begging letters, and those I now generally harden my heart about and send no reply; for the simple reason that when I have investigated the circumstances, I have generally found that the case has not been fairly stated, that facts have been concealed, and that in more cases than one the writer

makes a professional income by his epistolary labours.

Edward FitzGerald used to hold that every letter ought to be answered at exactly the same length as it was written, and reach down to the same place on the page. I do not at all feel that, and should be sorely puzzled to carry it out. There are long letters which need short answers, and short letters demanding long answers; but I practically answer everything; and though I suppose one has a right not to do so, yet I should do it as a simple matter of courtesy, unless it took up too much time.

The result, however, is that the letters which one would most like to write—full and leisurely budgets to friends—get pushed into a corner. Sometimes I have been forced to call in a short-hand writer and dictate replies; but in that case, if the letters are at all private, I am careful to put in no names and leave out anything that could lead to identification, filling up the gaps afterwards. I have not personally any sense of privacy about letters. As far as I am concerned I should not mind any one reading any of the letters I receive or write.

The test, I think, of a good letter is a very simple one. If one seems to hear the person talking as one reads the letter, it is a good letter. Of course a letter can be good for other reasons, because people's hands do not always work as fast as their brains. But if the letter gives one



a sense of the writer's personality, that is the first test. Some people, whose minds are active and whose conversation is pungent, write very uninteresting letters; and vice versa. Some of the most entertaining letters I ever read were from an old Scotch bailiff, who used to put the most delightful humorous touches into everything he wrote; but in talk he was shy and inarticulate. And there are some people who have the art of putting some characteristic touch into the briefest business note.

As a rule, I think people write very readable hands, though elegant handwriting is gone out. But one of the oddest things is that many people who write legibly enough will put a most illegible scrawl for the address, and a still more undecipherable hieroglyphic for the signature. I have been reduced to copying a name, stroke by stroke, on an envelope, and I have sometimes wished to cut a signature out and gum it on; but that has an air of discourtesy. There is one man, a secretary of an important institution, whose signature I have kept to show people. I have never known two people decipher it alike, and never any one at all who has come near to the correct interpretation. Again, one of the oddest facts is that I have more than once had letters from unknown women who have signed simply Christian name and surname; there has been nothing in the letter to indicate whether they were married or unmarried, and yet they

have written to me to remonstrate with me for not addressing them correctly. But I am told that on the whole it is better to address such letters as Mrs. rather than as Miss.

I know authors who make it a rule never to answer a letter from an unknown correspondent. But that seems to me inhuman. What can be more agreeable to an author, who writes for people in general, than to find that far-off readers have been interested, amused, or touched by what he has written? And my own experience has been that when I have been really moved by a book, and have felt it an act of simple gratitude to write to the author, known or unknown, I have always, or nearly always, received a kindly and friendly reply. In this mysterious and bewildering world, where so much is dark and sad, it seems to me intolerable not to return a smile by a smile, a word by a word; not to grasp a kind hand held out, but to put one's own hands behind one's back. To call or to think such communications intrusive or impertinent seems to me to be like the man in the shipwreck who would not accept a share in a floating spar proffered him by another passenger because he had not been formally introduced to him. Of course, if an author found that his work was being seriously hampered by having to answer letters of a trivial kind from innumerable correspondents, he could abstain from doing so, because he would rightly feel that he was doing his best to help

things along by his deliberate writings, and that his answer to inquirers lay there. Yet, even if I were in such a position, I should send a printed form of acknowledgment, unless such a course made serious inroads on my income.

But I do not think that our Anglo-Saxon race is likely to err on the side of effusiveness. One may be fairly certain that if one hears from an unknown person, that person is for some reason or other in earnest. I suppose possibly that a really famous or eminent author might be pestered by people who only desired to secure his autographs. For I well recollect staying with a famous public man, and how one evening after dinner his secretary came in, said with a smile that the autographs had run out, and produced a packet of half-sheets of paper. The great man, with a tired smile and an apology, produced a stylograph and signed his name again and again. "At the *top* of the paper, you observe," he said to me, "so that nothing can be written above it; and then only when people send an addressed and stamped envelope." That sort of thing, I confess, bewilders me; it seems to me to be human veneration reduced to its barest formula, its least common multiple.

What I rather feel on the whole subject of letters is that we tend, by inherited instinct, I expect, to look upon letters as more important and more costly things than they really are. There are many people who practically never

write to old comrades and friends, because they have a feeling that if they write at all they must write at length. But that is a great mistake; and by this indolent reticence many good ties are broken. The point is the letter, not the length or literary quality of the letter. And it is pitiful to think that a few words scribbled on a scrap of paper three or four times in a year might save many a good friendship, which perishes listlessly from lack of nutriment.

## VULGARITY

I HAVE sometimes wondered whether there is, or ever has been, a man or a woman in the world who knew and recognised himself or herself to be vulgar. I suppose the truth is that, with a rather vague term like vulgar, every one's inner definition of the word is framed so as somehow to exclude himself. As a matter of fact, I doubt if any but morbid people ever admit even to themselves that they can be frankly classified under some one evil designation. We do not mind confessing in a general way that we are sinners; but we prefer not to have our sins particularised by other people. A malicious man merely thinks that he is quick to detect the low and selfish motives by which most of his acquaintances are actuated. The rude person prides himself upon his candour. The drunkard thinks that a certain amount of alcohol is agreeable to him and innocuous, and that he could always stop consuming it if he chose. But imagine the ignominious tragedy of the moment if a man in the solitude of his own room should smite his hand upon his forehead and say, "I am a snob,

a vulgar snob." Yet there is no doubt that most people would far more resent the epithet vulgar being unhesitatingly applied to them by others than they would resent being labelled under decidedly graver moral offences. The code of honour, whatever its origin, is much more instinctive than the Christian code, and I fear there is no doubt that many men feel that the code of honour is their own affair, but that unpleasant moral failings are, to speak plainly, the affair of God. A man convicted of vulgarity or of snobishness would not readily excuse himself on the ground that he was made so, though that consolation is often self-applied to even grosser tendencies.

The word vulgarity is, as I have said, a somewhat difficult word to define, because it is applied on the one hand to a superficial set of qualities, matters of breeding and education, questions of demeanour and dress and pronunciation; and on the other hand, it covers some very grave and disagreeable faults indeed, which no one would with equanimity admit. In its ordinary sense the word is so much a question of comparison that no one would ever be likely to apply it to himself, because he would always have the comfort of thinking that there were persons below him in the social scale, to whom the term would be more truly applicable. It is, for instance, commonly applied to things which are after all merely matters of social ritual and observance.

We ought, I suppose, in these democratic days, to write and speak as if there were no such things as social distinctions. One man is just as good as another—indeed, a shade better. But the word vulgarity is applied by a man with equal force both to people whom he sees to have more advantages than himself in the way of money and society, as well as to people whom he considers to have fewer advantages than himself. In the first case it means pretentious, and in the second it means common. I remember once being told by a lady who did a great deal of philanthropic work that the most curious etiquette prevailed in some of the houses she used to visit about behaviour at meals. At one house, in drinking tea, the spoon had to be put in the cup and held firmly against the side of it with the forefinger, while the little finger had to be held out away from the cup with an air of graceful detachment. At another house, when you had drunk all the tea you cared to drink, you turned your cup upside down in the saucer. The two households appeared to be of exactly the same social standing; but my friend found out that the spoon-holders considered the inversion of the cup to be vulgar, while the inverters thought spoon-holding to be pretentious. The odd thing is that one should be amused by this, and think both practices alike absurd, when one is oneself just as exacting in the use of the knife. I should consider that it would be a sign of inferior breeding

for a man to shovel green peas into his mouth with a knife, however convenient; and I suppose that a man who naturally used his knife so would consider my prodding and dawdling with a fork under the same circumstances to be simply affectation.

But the vulgarity, if it can be called vulgarity, which attaches to the ritual of social observance is a very superficial and harmless thing. It is merely, to employ ecclesiastical terms, a question of a different use, like the Sarum Use and the Bangor Use. It is just a symbol of a different tradition, and is practically indicative of nothing but wealth and social standing.

But there is a vulgarity which is a very different affair, a rank and deep-seated quality of soul. This vulgarity is an ugly pretentiousness, an attempt to prove and assert superiority. Even here there are two kinds of pretentiousness. No one thinks a child vulgar if he has been tipped a half-sovereign, and goes about confiding the news of his astounding accession of fortune to every one in the house. And it may be unrefined, but it is not necessarily vulgar, when a man is so frankly delighted with his own good fortune, with his house, his wife, his man-servant and his maid-servant, his ox and his ass, that he cannot forbear speaking of such things in a good-humoured and joyful spirit, and showing them off to others. That may become very tiresome, because it is tiresome to be continually called



upon to admire things, especially if you do not really admire them. But the mischief comes in if the possessor of these fine things is pleased with them not so much because he enjoys them, as because other people are not so fortunate. Some of the most innately vulgar people I have known have been people of irreproachable courtesy and demeanour; but one gradually perceives that their standard is all wrong, that they put the wrong values on people, that they do not like men and women because they are likeable or interesting, but because they are important. The man who keeps one kind of geniality for a countess and another for a farmer's wife is very hard to respect. There is no sort of reason why a man should migrate from one class to another. If he is born an earl, there is no harm in his consorting with earls; but he must not treat an offensive earl with courtesy, and an inoffensive farmer with discourtesy. There is a pleasant old story of a duke who got into a railway compartment occupied by another duke and a commercial traveller. He talked affably with both. When he got out, the commercial traveller, impressed by the respect with which the stranger was received at the station, inquired of one of the porters who he was, and on hearing the fact, said genially to the other duke, "Now, that's what I call a gentleman! To think of his sitting here, hobnobbing with a couple of snobs like you and me." One only wishes that one could have

heard his further reflections when his other fellow-traveller left him, and he discovered his identity as well.

Vulgarity seems to lie not so much in a certain kind of action as in the motive that underlies the action; not so much in what you do and say, but in how you do it and say it. If you have a famous and distinguished relative, it is vulgar to tell stories about him, if your object is to glorify yourself; it is not in the least vulgar to tell stories about him if they are designed to be and are obviously interesting to your company. I have seen the thing done in both ways. May I tell a curious little adventure which happened to myself? Some years ago I sat next a stranger at a hotel *table-d'hôte*, who paraded rather needlessly his acquaintance with well-known ecclesiastics. He made an erroneous statement about Lambeth, and appeared to be going on to criticise its recent occupants. I thought he might regret having committed himself, and demurred to his statement. He looked at me, and said rather impertinently, "May I ask if you know Lambeth?" "Yes," I said, "I lived there for a good many years." After which he treated me with much increased civility. It was this latter trait which appears to me to have been vulgar, but it is quite possible that he considered me vulgar too for obtruding my experience.

The worst of vulgarity is that it is so insidious a fault; and I fear it is true that the more apt

one is to detect vulgarity in other people, the more likely it is that one suffers from the fault oneself. The root of it is a false sense of dignity and a settled complacency. Sometimes, as I have said, that complacency is so strong and deep that the vulgarity of it all is difficult to detect, because the offender is so conscious of his superiority that he does not even think it worth while to assert it. There is a delightful old picture in *Punch* of two intensely feeble, brainless, and chinless peers, standing together at a reception in some big house. In the background, dimly outlined, looms the mighty form of Tennyson. One says to the other, "By the way, I hear that What's-his-name, that poet feller, is going to become one of us." When complacency reaches this stage, it is on so colossal a scale as to be almost magnificent, though when Tennyson was made a peer there were, no doubt, a good many people who considered it an honour bestowed on literature rather than an honour conferred upon the peerage.

Like all secret faults, vulgarity is difficult to detect; but a man may suspect that he is in danger, if he finds himself inclined to compare himself favourably with other people, and if he is inclined to take credit to himself rather than to feel gratitude for any success he may have achieved. The fault may exist with high genius. It can hardly be denied that Byron was vulgar, and that Napoleon was vulgar. On the other hand, Nelson and Wordsworth, both of whom

were fully conscious of their high gifts, had not the least touch of it. They were proud, while Byron and Napoleon were vain; and vanity is almost certain to display itself in vulgarity. The essence of vulgarity is not so much to succeed as to wish to be known to succeed; not to be better than others, but to wish to seem better than others; not to possess greatness, but to wish to be envied for your greatness. And it may be said that any man who cares more about his work than about himself cannot possibly be vulgar; while a man who cares about his work as giving a pedestal for his own statue is almost inevitably so.

## SINCERITY

SINCERITY is one of the virtues which we all admire when we see it, but which is very hard to practise deliberately, for the simple reason that it disappears, like humility, the moment that it becomes self-conscious. Uriah Heep, in *David Copperfield*, was for ever asserting his humility; but as soon as a man becomes proud of being so humble, he is humble no longer. Similarly, the man who is preoccupied with his own sincerity, is well on his way to become insincere, because his sincerity has become a pose. The essence of sincerity is simplicity, and simplicity conscious of itself is one of the most complicated things in the world. The old definition of sincere used to be *sine cera*, "without wax," and it was supposed to be a metaphor from honey strained off pure and translucent from the comb. A pretty, though wholly fanciful, etymology; but the idea is a true one—the rich, authentic, crystalline, fragrant substance of the soul, without any cloudy or clogging intermixture; it would be simple enough if all souls were like that!

But the difficulty for most of us is that we are

painfully conscious of a duality, even a multiplicity, of elements, a sad jumble of qualities, even of opposite qualities, stored in our spirits, like the contents of some ancient lumber-room. What is the practical issue of it all? If we want to be sincere—and it is a quality that we all admire and most of us desire—does it mean that we are to exhibit all our wares? If we are irritable, mean, jealous, selfish, is it sincere to parade these things, or at all events to make no effort to conceal them? Are we bound to say, like the Master of Ballantrae, in words which contain perhaps the sincerest confession of self ever put in the mouth of a character in fiction, “I am a pretty bad fellow at bottom”? Is it hypocrisy to attempt to hide our faults? Sometimes that is the most effectual way of getting rid of them. It would be absurd to say that if a man felt irritable, he was hypocritical if he did not show it, or that if he was conscious of being of a jealous disposition, he was bound to approve and applaud instances of jealous behaviour in other people, for the sake of being consistent. The curious thing about English people is that they tend, if anything, to be hypocritical about their virtues rather than about their faults. I know several people who are ashamed of appearing to be as generous and as tender-hearted as they really are. We are naturally an emotional and a sentimental nation, and we are desperately afraid of betraying it. We like sentimental

books and plays and sermons, but we are very hard on sentimental talk. We like things that make us cry, better than things that make us laugh. John Bull, for all his top-boots and his ample waistcoat, is a very tender-hearted old fellow, and heartily dislikes to be thought so. We despise other nations for their courtesy and excitability, and think their display of emotion generally to be ridiculous and affected. Yet we ourselves are the victims of a deep-seated habit of posing. We pretend to be bluff and gruff, when we are really only shy and amiable. I had an old friend once who carried this to an almost grotesque degree. He was a friendly, rather soft-hearted man, but he got it into his head, early in life, that it was manly to be rough; he stamped about the house in enormous boots, and spoke what he called his mind on all occasions, though in reality he was only saying the sort of things that he imagined were appropriate to a man of the type that he had adopted. I went with him once to call on a distinguished lady. He was horribly shy, and showed it by sitting down on a chair the reverse way, holding the back between his knees, and agitating it to and fro as if he were riding a rocking-horse, while he criticised the luxury of the upper classes in a highly offensive way. He desired to give the impression of being totally unembarrassed, but wholly in vain, because his behaviour was merely supposed to be the result of an almost frenzied nervousness;

and, after all, it is not moral cowardice to be decorously respectful at the right time and place.

That is really the worst of the situation, that we do, in England, too often confuse roughness with sincerity, and offensiveness with candour; while in reality the essence of sincerity is that we should mean what we say, not that we should say all that we think. There is a story of Tennyson standing by the tea-table, while his wife and a distinguished authoress were exchanging some meaningless but harmless compliments, and gazing down upon them in silence, till a pause occurred, when he said in his most portentous tones, "What liars you women are!" That was not sincerity, but something like brutality; for after all it is no more insincere to conceal your thoughts than it is insincere to wear clothes.

We tend to limit the application of the word insincere almost wholly to matters of conversation, and curiously enough we limit it further almost entirely to the people who say pleasant and agreeable things. If a man tells an unpleasant truth, we say that he is frank; if he tells a pleasant truth, we say that he flatters. The best combination of urbanity and directness I know was afforded by an old friend of mine who took a lady in to dinner, and asked her many questions about herself and her relations in a way which showed he was intimately acquainted with her performances and family traditions. She said at last smilingly, "Well, it is a pleasant



surprise to find oneself so famous! How did you know all this, Mr. —— ?” An insincere man would have bowed, and murmured that some people were public property, and so forth. But my friend, with a twinkle in his eye, replied, “I asked.”

No one would, however, consider it to be insincere not to talk about anything which happened to be in his mind at the time. The difficulty rather is with people of genial and sympathetic temperament, who are apt in the excitement of the moment to say more than they mean, and to seem to undertake more than they can carry out. There are some people to whom it is absolutely natural to wish instinctively to stand well with the people in whose company they find themselves, and whose egotism takes the form not of talking about themselves, but of desiring themselves to be felt and appreciated, and to establish a personal relation with the particular people they happen to be thrown with. Some people at first sight seem to be extremely sympathetic, and the interest they feel may be temporary, but it is often at the moment quite genuine. The disappointment comes afterwards, when one finds that they have forgotten all about one, and make no attempt to follow up the relations which seemed to be happily established. Personally, I am glad of civility and interest and sympathy on any terms, and I do not claim an indefinite continuance of such favours. One should take exactly

what people are prepared to give, and not demand more. But it is a difficult matter to know what people who suffer from a plenitude of superficial sympathy ought to do. It is difficult to advise them to cultivate an indifferent and unsympathetic attitude. They must, however, expect to have to pay for the pleasure they both give and receive; they must be prepared to meet further claims, and to be criticised as insincere if they cannot meet them. "Too sweet to be wholesome," as an old Scotch keeper said to me of a lady whose adjectives outran her emotions. Yet the sincerity or the insincerity of such behaviour does greatly depend upon the motive that lies behind it. If there is in reserve a genuine good-will, and a sincere instinct for desiring to see and to make others happy, the unfavourable criticism is rarely made. I know more than one public man who has the blessed knack of making the most insignificant person in his company feel that he is the object of his sincere and active benevolence; and such persons are no more blamed for not prolonging their attentions in absence, than the sun is blamed for not shining at the bottom of a coal-pit. One feels that the sun is in his place, and can be depended upon to shine at the right season and under the right conditions. But the people who do get labelled insincere are those whose aim is not the happiness of other people, but their own comfort; who are sympathetic because they want to give

an impression of sympathy and kindness for their own satisfaction. And these are the hardest of all to enlighten, because they do not recognise that there is anything amiss, or perceive that their action is based on selfishness; and even if they do realise it, it is very hard for them to act otherwise, because one becomes unselfish through impulse and not through argument. One can cure oneself of a fault by discipline, but no amount of discipline will create a generous virtue.

Sometimes the world is startled by the revelation of the private wrong-doing of men of great outward respectability; of course if that wrong-doing is deliberate, and the outward pretence of virtue a mere mask donned for convenience, there is nothing to be said; that is the hypocrisy of the Pharisees. But a man who yields to evil from weakness does not necessarily desire to sin, and still less does he wish others to do so; a man who does wrong may be most sincerely on the side of the right, and even more intensely than others, if, as may well be the case, he realises the misery of his sin. Sincerity does not necessitate that every one should make public confession of everything, or that no one should ever dare to recommend a virtue which he cannot always practise. If we all lowered our proclaimed standard to the level of our private practice, we should merely countenance and encourage evil. Of course the truest sincerity is to amend our faults, and not to preach anything which we

do not honestly try to practise. And even in the worst cases of all, it is in itself a comfort to recognise that, as an old writer says, hypocrisy is, after all, the homage paid by vice to virtue.

What really makes all the difference is a deep-seated and conscious singleness of aim. A man may have many and patent faults. He may act inconsistently and even unworthily on occasions, and yet may be perfectly sincere, if he is not trying to fight on both sides in the battle. Failure matters little; it is the intention that shines through. The man who cannot be sincere is the man who gets all the pleasure that he safely can out of evil, and professes a belief in what is good, for the sake of the convenience it brings him.

And therefore, as I say, sincerity is a virtue that can hardly be directly cultivated. It is rather like a flower which follows naturally and in due course, if the right seed be sown.

## RESOLUTIONS

IN the year 1781, when he had somewhat more than three years of life remaining to him, Dr. Johnson wrote in one of his little memorandum books:

August 9, 3 P.M., *ætat.* 72, in the summer-house at Streatham.

After innumerable resolutions formed and neglected, I have retired hither to plan a life of greater diligence, in hope that I may yet be useful, and be daily better prepared to appear before my Creator and my Judge, from whose infinite mercy I humbly call for assistance and support.

My purpose is to pass eight hours of every day in some serious employment.

Having prayed, I purpose to employ the next six weeks upon the Italian language for my settled study.

There is something, I always feel, very gallant and adventurous about this. The old lion was near his end; he was suffering from a painful complication of disorders; the thought of death was, as it always had been, a grievous and overshadowing dread to him; and yet here is the old man on his knees, planning a new and practical

scheme of life, including eight hours a day of serious employment and six weeks devoted to the study of Italian! There is no evidence that the scheme was ever carried out; he wrote nothing after this date except a refutation of the authenticity of the Ossianic poems; and there is no reason to think that he applied himself to Dante; indeed, an extreme dislike of all regular employment had been from the earliest days one of Johnson's most besetting infirmities; yet there is something splendid in the hopefulness, the candour, the humility of the whole entry. No one ever made and broke so many vows as Dr. Johnson, and yet it never occurs to one to doubt his rugged sincerity, his fervent aspirations after perfection. No one ever abased himself so profoundly before God, or lamented his faults so vehemently, or judged his own performances so severely; and yet there was nothing sentimental about his piety; he neither cringed nor crawled before his fellow-men; he had no washy tolerance for the faults and foibles of others; he did not spare his fellows; he argued just as vehemently, he silenced his opponents just as peremptorily, he laid down the law just as overbearingly, as if he had never known what it was to be penitent and contrite. How different from the piety of poor Coleridge, snivelling over his cup of cold tea at Highgate, and crying out lamentably, "But it is better than I deserve"! The point is to take your punishment like a man when it comes, and not to whine about it. If

you glory in it, you make the punishment palatable by increasing your consciousness of meekness and patience. Who does not remember the self-righteous old servant in *The Master of Ballantrae*, who took to his bed and bore himself like an afflicted saint? "But the root of his malady, in my poor thought," says the shrewd Mackellar, "was drink."

Yet on the other hand, there is something to be urged against ceaseless privately conducted scrutiny into one's own conduct. Half the danger of pet faults is that they are so ingeniously screened from their owner. There are many faults which are the seamy side of virtues; the ill-tempered man seems to himself to be bluff and outspoken, the tactless man to be frank and candid, the mean man to be strenuously economical, the poor-spirited man to be patient and unworldly. I have never derived so much benefit from introspection as I have derived from the unconsidered utterance of a blunt friend or an offensive enemy; and a secret process, where one is judge and jury and advocate and prisoner and executioner all at once, generally results in a plea of justification or extenuating circumstances.

It may fairly be maintained that much making of little resolutions, with the inevitable sequel of much breaking of them, is neither a very fruitful nor a very wholesome process. It is not very wholesome, because it implies a good deal of raking in the rubbish-heaps of the soul; and there

is a good deal to be said for the old mystical doctrine called *Transcension*, which means nothing more than a very practical abbreviation of the period of repentance. The idea is that prolonged and wilful self-abasement is not a very inspiring process, and that one's moral failures are best interred as speedily as possible. Dr. Johnson was, in fact, a very prompt and sane Transcensionist, though he would no doubt have revolted from it if he had known its technical and scholastic name. Again, the process of resolution-making and resolution-breaking is not, as I have said, a very fruitful one; it is weakening to the fibre of the soul to be for ever taking pledges which one has only a very feeble hope of fulfilling. The practice is somewhat stuffy; it wants ventilation; it needs a little crude publicity. One is not likely to be very much ashamed of not keeping a promise made to oneself, which one only feels it would be convenient, if possible, to perform. As a common-sense friend once said to me, talking about the whole subject: "No, I don't make resolutions; if I think I am capable of doing what I want to do, I don't need a resolution; if I think I am incapable of carrying out an intention, it only makes things worse if I take a resolution without expecting to keep it."

In fact, I am disposed to think that if a matter is serious enough, and if one is conscious enough of weakness to distrust one's own powers of self-



reformation, the only thing to do is to take some wise and kindly person into confidence, and to pledge oneself to state, at some fixed future date, how things have been going. That can be a real assistance, because it introduces the external element which well-intentioned but weak-minded people stand in need of. And, in any case, the thing ought to be done solemnly and seriously, and not too often. It is undoubtedly a wise thing to do to take stock, so to speak, at intervals. One cannot cure a fault in a week or develop a virtue in a month. But if one surveys a considerable period, it is possible to see whether one has advanced or retreated.

But, like all personal things, it is largely a matter of temperament. If the making of resolutions is a practice that helps people, there is no conceivable reason why they should not have recourse to it. Even then, the danger is of trying to make progress in details, of making a fussy and a petty business of the whole thing, instead of advancing on large lines. I have often mistrusted the old proverb about looking after the pence, and letting the pounds take care of themselves. That generally seems to me to result in great discomfort and little accumulation. Much more substantial fortunes are made by looking after the pounds, and not fretting over the pence.

The thing is to have a line of one's own; to be sensible, hopeful, and courageous, rather than to be in a perpetual condition of scrupulous self-

accusation and morbid discouragement; and to remember that, if it is indeed true that hell is paved with good resolutions, it is no less true that heaven is roofed with them!

## BIOGRAPHY

It is a very interesting question as to how biographies ought to be written, and what are, or ought to be, the precise limits of discretion and indiscretion permitted to a biographer. The primary difficulty is this: It is easy to tell nothing but the truth about a man, and yet to give a thoroughly erroneous idea of him. Yet if a biography is written soon after the death of its subject, it may be impossible, with due regard for the feelings of survivors and relatives, to tell the whole truth. On the other hand, it is practically inevitable that a biography should be issued soon after a man's death. If it is deferred, it may be deferred for ever. In these days, when rapidity is a notable characteristic of the age, our memories are short. The kaleidoscope shifts fast, and the personality of to-day becomes a shadowy memory to-morrow. What, then, is a biographer to do? Is he to submit his biography to every one who has the least right to be consulted? And if so, is he bound to defer to the preferences and prejudices of those whom he consults? And then there comes in a further difficulty. In the

life of men who have played a considerable part in the world, there are sure to be episodes and controversies which have a considerable temporary interest, but the interest of which is bound to expire before very long. To what extent is the biographer bound to devote large tracts of his book to these affairs? It is certain that there will be a good many people who will expect such episodes to be treated fully, and will pronounce the book to be incomplete unless a good deal of space is thus occupied. But the result of this upon the general reader—the man who is more interested in the personality than in the detailed work of the hero—will be that the book will convey an impression of heaviness and dulness. Are these technicalities to be introduced for the sake of technical students, or are they to be merely summarised and popularised for the sake of the general reader? These and similar difficulties have all to be faced by the biographer.

The worst of the position is that the people who have what is called a right to object, do not, as a rule, object to the right things. There are a good many picturesque incidents and adventures which may happen to a man, which are not really material to his biography. They may be interesting enough, but often the interest they possess is not derived from the illustration they afford of the personality of the hero, but because they cast light upon some other interesting personage. These can be safely and fairly omitted.

But the points which the relatives of a man often object to are picturesque, humorous, vivid details, which they think display him in an undignified, impatient, vehement, or inconsiderate light. People are apt to lose all sense of humour in the presence of death; and the unfortunate thing is that the more vivid and impetuous a man is, the more of these incidents are likely to be on record. The result of such a biography, where too much deference is paid to the wishes of relatives, is that there is what Jowett described as a strong smell of something left out. One gets a stately, dignified, statuesque, saintly kind of portrait, which is to intimate friends nothing more than a sickening caricature, and bears as much resemblance to the true man as his features viewed in a spoon.

I suppose it may be admitted that Boswell's Johnson is probably the best biography ever written. But here there were some very marked advantages which simplified the situation. Johnson was a childless widower, and had no very close circle of relatives to be deferred to. Moreover, though there were plenty of incidents and occasions on which Johnson displayed neither the courtesy of a gentleman nor the forbearance of a Christian, yet there were far more numerous instances of noble generosity, splendid courage, and fervent piety. The result of Boswell's book is that we get the very heart and mind of a great man; and therefore it may be fairly said that if

a biography is meant to interest posterity, a considerable degree of what is called indiscretion is not only permissible but necessary; and more than that. The enormous merit of Boswell as a biographer is that he knew that many of the things that are usually dismissed as trivial are really the things in which the human mind is most deeply interested. There is a story told somewhere, of certain elderly ladies who enjoyed reading biography. Their method was a simple one. When they saw before them such words as "policy" or "progress" they hastily turned the page; when they encountered such words as "smallpox" or "pony" they devoured every syllable. The biographer must keep this fact in view, or, rather, he must have an instinctive knowledge of what interests himself, rather than a theory of what ought to interest the well-regulated mind—a type of mind which is in reality as uncommon as it is intolerable.

Let me take a few instances of recent biographies, and indicate the qualities by which they succeeded or the reverse. The *Life of Lord Macaulay*, by Sir George Trevelyan, is one of the best Lives of the last century. It is neither too technical nor too minute. But then Macaulay was a very amiable man, and a decidedly picturesque figure, thoroughly human and pleasantly gay, so that there was little possibility of offence, and infinite scope for a truthful biographer.

The *Life of Tennyson*, by the present Lord

Tennyson, is a collection of extremely interesting and vivid material. Tennyson had the quality of personal impressiveness. As the life of a poet, it is admirable. But there was another side, which kept Tennyson, in spite of his genius, intensely human: he had no petty qualities, except perhaps his vanity, but he had unrestrained, homely, frank, full-blooded moods—perhaps but rarely displayed to his son—the absence of which in the biography renders the picture incomplete. He could never have been anything but dignified, but his dignity was not quite on such pure and equable lines as the book conveys the impression of, and it was perhaps a larger and a finer thing, because of the very conflict which the book hardly reveals.

The *Lives of Morris and Burne-Jones*, by Professor Mackail and Lady Burne-Jones respectively, are both beautiful and admirable books, because they reveal so much of the inner spirit of the two men. In form, I think that the *Life of William Morris* has been rarely surpassed. Its proportion is exquisite, and the tale is told with a masterly unity and an equable progress. The *Life of Burne-Jones* is notable for a charming simplicity and *naïveté* of presentment, which seems to bring one into direct touch with the artist himself. Yet I have heard each *Life* criticised by intimate friends of the two men. I have heard it said that a certain hardness of character, an unsympathetic self-absorption in his own work,

which characterised Morris, was not sufficiently indicated; and that in Burne-Jones there was a certain freakishness of disposition, a petulance of spirit, of which the book gives little idea. I am not in a position to estimate the truth of these criticisms. But it is certain that a man of intense energy and will-power, such as Morris possessed, cannot pursue a very definite line of work without collisions with dissimilar natures; while a nature like Burne-Jones's is liable to reactions of weariness and depression, which are bound to play a part in his life.

In a biography of a different kind, the *Life of Lord Randolph Churchill*, it seems to me that the balance is very judiciously and faithfully preserved. Mr. Winston Churchill there exhibited the rare gift of never allowing his critical sense to be overpowered by filial admiration and sympathy. He contrives to be amazingly dispassionate and impersonal. The result is that the book displays to the full the strength and the generosity of its subject, while it clearly reveals the impulsiveness of temperament which was fatal to stability and sturdiness of character and career. The book is candid, vivid, and just, and holds a high place among contemporary biographies.

One other book I would here mention, because of all recent biographical studies it is almost supreme in psychological interest. *Father and Son* was hailed by many readers, apart from its exquisite literary skill, as a record of extraor-



dinary subtlety, pathos, and humour; and what was felt by such readers to be its consummate beauty was that the biographer never either exalted or spared himself in tracing the lineaments of a character in many respects so alien to his own; and thus it appeared to be an almost triumphant combination of critical observation and tender devotion. Yet, on the other hand, there were critics who held it to be a violation of domestic piety and filial duty! We cannot disregard such criticism as being merely reactionary and stupid; it has, no doubt, a wholesome element, and as long as humanity exists there must always be a conflict between reverence and candour, between emotion and art.

The difficulty, then, is ultimately insoluble. On the one hand, if a biographer is not intimate with his subject he cannot give a lifelike portrait; if he is intimate, he may hesitate to be frank, or if he is frank, he will be accused of impiety. And, again, we suffer under the defects of our quality; for English writers have been pre-eminent for the seriousness with which they have treated moral ideas in art. There is thus a tendency on the part of the public to demand that a book must be edifying; and so a compromise seems almost essential. If the lives of all great men were invariably edifying, there would be no difficulty—yet no one has ever accused St. Augustine of being indiscreet! The only rule would seem to be that the biographer

must not suppress or omit essential features of life and character; and that he must trust to the whole effect being ultimately inspiring and edifying. The real weakness of the idealising biographer is this: that we are most of us frail; and that it encourages us far more, in reading the lives of great men, to see them regretting their failures, fighting against their temptations, triumphing over their unworthy qualities, than to read the life of a man which seems to be merely an equable progress from strength to strength, a prosperous voyage over serene seas to a haven of repose and glory.

## GOSSIP

It was said of Queen Victoria by one who knew her well that the conversation she liked best was conversation that was personal without being gossipy. That is only another of the many instances in which the Queen in matters of practical conduct instinctively drew the line in the exact place, and made the right distinction. To be able to do this is only possible to people who possess a supreme combination of fine feeling and perfect common-sense. It is extremely difficult to lay down principles in the matter of conversation, or to regulate the use and abuse of what is currently called gossip. It is not a question simply of what one listens to, and what one says, but whom one listens to, and to whom one talks. To lay down a general rule that one ought not to discuss other people is to be a preposterous prig. If human beings are not to be interested in each other's acts and words, and are not to discuss them, it is very hard to say what they may discuss. It is equally unreasonable to say that one ought not to discuss one's friends behind their back, or that one ought not to say anything

about an acquaintance that one is not prepared to say before him, because it is not by any means always good for people to know the truth about themselves, whether it be palatable or unpalatable. The difficulty about the whole question is that we all of us do and say things that we ought not to do or say, of which we are or ought to be ashamed, and which we do not wish to be included in the impression which we should like others to form of us. Another practical difficulty is that there are many things which may fairly be said, which may not fairly be repeated, and that some listeners are naturally leaky. They may hear a thing in confidence, and even if they are not seized with a burning desire to proclaim it, because every one likes to astonish and surprise and interest others, they soon forget that it was confidential, and impart it as naturally as they impart all they know.

We most of us lead an exterior life which is public property, and which any one may legitimately discuss, and an interior life which we share with our circle of intimates. But it is not fair to say that we have no right to make public what we learn through intimacy. There are many people who make a less agreeable impression on the world than they do on their friends, and if the friends are not to endeavour to correct and improve that impression, their friendship is not worth much. Again, to say, as I have heard worthy people say, that one ought only to speak

well of others, makes both for dulness and insincerity. Sometimes it is a plain duty, if one knows evil of a man, to warn an inexperienced person who may be drifting into intimacy with him; and apart from that, we all of us have faults and foibles, not of a serious kind, which may be fairly and not even uncharitably discussed by friends and foes alike. It is perhaps fair to postulate that we must not say, either maliciously or thoughtlessly, things, however true, which tend to make a person more odious or more ridiculous than he need be. But it is not human to maintain that if a notoriously vain or rude person is mentioned, no one is under any consideration to mention salient instances of his vanity or rudeness. What a kindly person instinctively does is to mention at the same time instances of the more agreeable traits of such characters, which may tend to escape observation. The one thing that is really unpardonable is to tell a person who has been the subject of discussion what his critics or foes have said about him. It is, of course, conceivable that such a thing may be done from good motives, or at all events a tale-bearer probably as a rule deceives himself into thinking that his motives are good. But heaven guard us from such motives! I have known the thing done often enough, and I have never known it to do anything but cause pain and suspicion and mortification. Personally, I do not care in the least what anyone, friend or foe, says of me behind

my back, as long as I am not told of their criticisms. I am quite aware of my faults, and anxious to get rid of them. To know that they are discussed by others is only humiliating; to believe that they are not observed, or charitably viewed by others, encourages me to try to do better. There are, of course, people in the world whose temperament seems to have turned sour. It is not wholly their fault. Sometimes ill-health is the cause, sometimes dull and petty surroundings, sometimes a lack of close human relationships, or an absence of normal activities. In such hands as these, gossip undoubtedly becomes a corroding and malignant process. I sat the other day in a hotel close to a party of three elderly ladies, sisters, I thought, who were travelling, it seemed, in search of material for conversation. But on the particular evening in question they were indulging in a species of anatomical demonstration. They laid friend after absent friend upon the block and dissected each mercilessly and minutely. It was rather a terrible display of human nature, and, like the poet, I looked at the ladies "and did not wish them mine."

But when all is said, the thing must be a matter of instinct and grace rather than of principle and effort. A good-humoured and tolerant man may say things without a suspicion of offence which in the hands of a malicious and unkindly person would seem like a shower of mud; gossip is, after all, but the natural outcome of interest

in other human beings; and it is better that we should be interested in each other, even at the expense of some sharpness of criticism. There is a fine apophthegm which sums up the whole matter—and in passing may I say that I wish I could discover the source of the quotation?

“ There ’s so much good in the worst of us,  
There ’s so much bad in the best of us,  
That it ill beseems any one of us  
To find much fault with the rest of us.”

That is large-minded enough for anything—a finer maxim than the deliciously cynical remark made by one of the characters in Mr. Mallock’s *New Republic*, who justifies scandal on the ground that it is a thing based on one of the most sacred of qualities—truth, and built up by one of the most beautiful of qualities—imagination.

## TACTFULNESS

It was only a conversation, and we came to no conclusion, like the talkers in Plato's dialogues. The subject of *tact* came up, I do not know how, and one of the party said: "Who is the most tactful person you know?" There was a silence, and then the same speaker said triumphantly, "Can you mention any one whom you consider really tactful?" A name was mentioned. "Oh, no!" said another; "A—— is not tactful—he is only discreet; he talks about things and questions and facts, and never mentions people; he runs no risks. It is not tactful to keep out of hot water yourself. The point is to keep other people out of hot water." This was agreed to, and another name was mentioned. "Oh dear no!" said the same objector; "he is tactful in the sense that he is full of tact; but he is too full. It is as though he used too strong a scent, and too much of it. He always reminds me of a story of the late Master of Trinity. Someone, speaking of a popular preacher before him, said: 'I like his sermons; he has so much taste.' 'Yes,' said the Master, 'and all of it so bad.'" This gravamen



was accepted, and a third name was mentioned, to which our critic said: "No, he is not quite right either; the really tactful man should pour in both oil and wine. Now, B—— supplies the oil freely, but forgets the wine; he mollifies, he does not stimulate."

One of the party then said very gently: "Well, we are talking frankly, and I will say that I consider myself a tactful person." There was a silence, while the circle reflected, and the chief critic said meditatively: "Dr. Johnson said once that he considered himself a polite man." There was a laugh at this, and we gave up trying to discover tactful people.

The conversation then became general and impersonal, and though we came to no conclusions, we indulged in many brisk and inaccurate generalisations, the chief of which I will try to summarise.

The fact is that tactfulness, like humility, is one of the virtues the very existence of which depends upon its escaping observation. The moment that it becomes conscious of itself, or that others become conscious of it, it either evaporates, or becomes almost offensive. It must be unsuspected, like the onion in the salad; if it is detected, it is *ipso facto* excessive. It is very difficult to say in what tact exactly consists. Like all other subtle qualities, it is an instinctive gift; and though it can be improved upon, if it is there, it can hardly be acquired. The tactful

person, by some secret grace, keeps a hundred things in his mind, and applies them all. It is not that he says to himself, "This topic will not do because A—— will not like it"; nor does he say, "This subject will interest the party and enable B—— to shine, so I will start it." He does not determine not to give offence, nor does he wish to draw people out, or to reconcile them. He is merely perfectly natural and kindly; he does not desire to please; he simply wants everyone to be comfortable and natural too. The result is that guests leave a party at which a tactful person has held the reins, not saying, "How well our host directed the conversation," but merely feeling that they have themselves been at their best; and thus tactfulness does not as a rule earn praise and gratitude; it only increases happiness and expansiveness. It cannot be noticed at the time, for the tactful person is the person with whom you feel instinctively at ease. The tactful person does not horrify the shy specialist by asking him, in a silence, a leading question on his subject; while if a dangerous topic is introduced, he does not interrupt, but steers the talk delicately into safer waters. He modulates, so to speak, out of the key; he does not crash in some inharmonious chord.

Tactfulness does not by any means aim at producing a kind of sunset effect on a conversation, a harmonious golden light over everything. The tactful person will often provoke an argu-

ment, and even encourage a heated controversy, if he knows the antagonists can be trusted to use the gloves good-humouredly. He sees fair play and is time-keeper as well as referee. And he sees, too, when a party is inclined to listen rather than to talk, and has the power of talking generally but unobtrusively—unobtrusively, because the essential point is that he should never arouse jealousy, or create a suspicion that the situation is being handled, still less adroitly handled. And thus the tactful person can hardly be enthusiastic, because enthusiasm implies a certain combativeness; but he must be able to appreciate enthusiasm in other people, and, what is more, to interpret and harmonise enthusiasm in such a way as to make it seem natural and agreeable, instead of appearing, as it often does, superior and fanatical. And the real reason why the tactful person is so rare is that tactfulness implies a union of a great many qualities, quick observation of tones of voice and facial expression and little gestures, a good memory, genuine sympathy, good-humour, promptness, justice, and a considerable range, not only of intellectual interests, but of current interests of every kind. And this combination is not a common one.

Such was our talk, amusing enough, and not exhausting. We picked up some pretty thoughts by the way, and we separated under a vow that we would search like Diogenes for tactful persons, and when we had found them be careful not to betray them.

## ON FINDING ONE'S LEVEL

It always makes me very suspicious of a man's perception or knowledge of the world to hear him generalise easily about people. A man who says that children always know at first sight who loves them, and who does not, and that all boys are generous and all young men confident and all women unselfish, is a person from whose conversation I do not expect much benefit. The more one knows of people, the more mysterious and unaccountable they become. But there is one feeling which I think is common to most human beings towards the end of their time of education, when they are about to enter the world. By that time, after a strict course of examination, we know fairly well where we stand intellectually. We know how well we play games, we have few delusions about our personal appearance, except a vague idea that we look rather well at certain angles and in a subdued light. But we almost all of us believe that we are interesting and effective in our own way. We think that if we could describe our views and opinions, they would be seen to be sensible, and to have a certain charm ;

and we many of us believe that, under favourable circumstances and with the right material, we have a degree of real effectiveness. One does not wish to deprive people too quickly of their illusions, because they produce a certain sunshine of the mind, without which happy and contented work is hardly possible. But, curiously enough, it is not, as a rule, the gifted people who are complacent and conceited. They are generally clever enough to see that their best is not very good, and to perceive their many deficiencies. Complacency is not a thing which depends upon applause or admiration: it is a quality of mind, and often robustly independent of all results and comparisons. But even if we are not complacent, we most of us take up our work in the world with a vague presage of success, for the simple reason that successfulness is not by any means the result of commanding qualities, but a quality in itself, a blend of tenacity and tact. The work of the world does not for the majority of people require commanding ability or ornamental gifts. It requires good-humour and patience and industry and the power of taking pains.

Well, we shoulder our burden and go out into the world, and at once the process of sorting begins. A few people have a stroke of luck at the outset. They slip into a good opening; they get an appointment which is rather better than they deserve; they know some one with influence, who makes the first step an easy one. But most

of us find ourselves with a perfectly ordinary and commonplace task, with an income to earn and a place to make. Perhaps for a few years we are not wholly contented; we think we have not had quite a fair chance; and then we find that it needs all our powers even to do our own simple piece of work satisfactorily; we begin to see that we must not hope for any great recognition, and that strokes of luck are not things to be depended upon. Then the years begin to fly past us like telegraph posts. We settle into our work, we marry, the income has to be increased; if possible, the children have to be educated. We have been in the habit of considering ourselves, on the whole, young people, with a good many possibilities ahead. Suddenly we awake to the fact that we are five and forty, a little stiffer in the joints than formerly, with streaks of grey in our hair, or perhaps a tendency to baldness. And then we realise with a shock that our prospect of any great development of life and fortune is over; we are ordinary citizens, undistinguished persons, with our position and our income and our abilities perfectly clear to every one, and with no particular hope of being or becoming anything else than what we are.

It is then, I think, that the great strain of life falls upon a man. He can be interesting and romantic no longer; he has lost his vague ambitions. There are no more worlds to conquer, and he would not know how to set about con-

quering them if there were. He is at the dividing of the ways. He cannot even persuade himself that he is particularly effective at his own job. He can do it, perhaps, conscientiously and faithfully; but he cannot hope to be told to take dominion over ten cities.

It is then, I believe, that the real great choice of life is made. If a man is sensible, good-humoured, and right-minded, he shrugs his shoulders with a smile, and reflects that though he has not made a great splash, he has found an abundance of good things by the way. He has a loving wife, perhaps, and a handful of healthy and well-conducted children. He has all sorts of human ties, with friends, colleagues, servants. He has a comfortable home, enough leisure, a pleasant hobby or two. Life has not been a startling or a surprising thing; he has not been crowned or venerated; he has not made a fortune nor become famous; but he has a perfectly well-defined place, and an honest bit of work behind him and before him. There is nothing splendid about it, but there need be nothing sordid either. He has had his share, no doubt, of cares, griefs, anxieties; and they have taught him, perhaps, that he must not count on continuance; and he is happier still if he has found the need and proved the worth of faith, to look beyond the visible horizon for a further dawning. And then if he is wise he settles down with a certain restfulness to life and duty and kindness. The love of the little circle

multiplies and throws out fresh tendrils. He sees that the glitter and brightness that at first allured him, the hope of marvellous successes and great surprises, was not really that of which he was in search. He has found his level at last, and with it peace.

But it sometimes takes a man in a very different way. He begins to think he has had no luck, to envy and malign his contemporaries who have made what he calls a better thing out of it all. He begins to be withdrawn into himself in a sort of listless bitterness, to call his friend the Canon a windbag, and his acquaintance the Member of Parliament a time-server. He begins to think that it is in virtue of his own candour and rugged honesty that he is stranded, and that the world only rewards quacks and opportunists. In these unwholesome exercises he loses all the zest and flavour of life; he gets particular about his little comforts, tyrannical in his family. He becomes a man with a grievance, and when he is shunned as a bore, he puts it down to snobbery. He thinks that the world is against him, when it is he that is against the world.

Now the question arises how this melancholy kind of business can be avoided, and it is very difficult to give an answer. Is it inevitable that the world should turn out a dreary place for a good many people: for disappointed, ill-paid men; for lonely and loveless women; for all suspicious and cross-grained and ill-conditioned persons?



The approaches of dreariness are so insidious, and so much of it comes from physical causes, want of exercise and congenial occupation, and, worst of all, from want of hopefulness. When people have drifted into this condition it is hard to see what can uplift them. The cure must begin, if it begins at all, long before the need for it is apparent. The mischief arises, in the first place, from a low kind of ambition, a desire for material success and comfortable consideration; and it arises in the second place, from living by impulse rather than by discipline, from behaving as one is inclined to behave, and not as one knows one ought to behave. If a man could find a medicine for middle-aged discontent, it would be the greatest discovery in the world. Some people find it in religion, and it may be said that in religion only, using the word in its largest and noblest sense, can the cure be found. If a man or a woman in that frame of mind can but believe that the life and the soul of all mortals is indeed dear to God, if he can lay hold of the blessed fact that in a real surrender alone can strength be found, then peace can creep back into the shattered hopes and the broken designs. The only thing we can do is to realise that we are here to learn and apprehend something, and that peace lies in this alone—not in the fortune we have made, or the renown that we have won. Those are pleasant and sunshiny things enough, but if one has once been confronted with a desperate

sorrow, one knows that they have not the smallest power to distract or sustain. And in the surrender itself there is indeed a secret joy. The soul folds its tired wings and waits for the truth that it has missed to be shown to it; then, and not till then, the smallest moments and incidents of life begin to have a significance; the message comes fast, when the soul's complaint is hushed into silence. It matters then little how we are placed, how humble our work may be, because we begin to taste not the praise of men but the gifts of God. Then the little stream, fretted and broken in rocky places and narrow channels, creeps out into the bosom of the lake, where sound and foam no longer are heard; and so the true level is found at last.

## THE INNER LIFE

SPRING came on us to-day in the deep country with a sudden leap. It has been a long and dreary winter here, sullen, rainy weather, and the earth seems soaked like a sponge. Wherever one goes, in the fields, in the lanes, there are runnels and water-breaks that I have never seen before. The flowers have been doing their best to appear, but the coverts and hedges are very leafless as yet, though I saw yesterday that lovely empurpled flush over a great wood of birches that veils a wild moorland tract, which tells of mounting sap and life revived. Yesterday the wind, which has been buffeting and volleying up from the south-west, died down, and to-day the sun shines out, and everything seems glad to be alive. It is not wholly delightful to one who, like myself, has the constitution of a polar bear! The languor of spring is a doubtful pleasure. It wrung from Keble, in *The Christian Year*, the only almost petulant complaint which that very controlled writer ever indulged in. He writes:

“I sigh, and fain could wish this weariness were death!”

I do not feel that! There is something delicious about it, if one is not hard at work. But I am so wedded to what I call my work, that I half grudge these days when one cannot attend to business; and yet if one goes out, one knows what Homer means when he says that a man's knees and heart are loosed. One is unstrung, undecided, vague. I do not at all like the languor about three degrees this side of faintness, which Keats said was one of the luxuries of spring; I like to be judiciously and temperately frozen, when all that one does is sharp-set and has a keen edge to it. But that is only a private and personal opinion.

Yet to-day, as I walked in country lanes and among copses, I became aware that something very beautiful and wonderful was going on. The birds fluted deliciously, the primroses peeped like stars from the mossed roots of hedgerow trees, the pretty lilac cuckoo-flower pushed up freshly beside the runnel. The annual miracle was being performed, and oh, how swiftly and sweetly! Everything glad to live, the tree unfolding its green tufts, the flower spreading itself in the sun. The children whom I met had their hands full of blooms. I am afraid that as I get older, I like that less and less. I cannot help feeling that the flower has a dim consciousness of its own, and that the unfurling of the bud must be a joyful excitement. It must hurt, I think, to have one's arrangements interfered with and one's pretty

limbs torn away. Even if the broken stem does not actually ache, it must be a disappointment not to have the sun in one's face, and to have all one's cheerful plans for getting to the light swept away by little hot fingers. I hate to see woodland corners strewn with withering flowers, just picked for a whim, their sweet breath inhaled, and then dropped to wither.

Then, too, I think as I walk, how, as the years go on, the springs begin to race past one, like telegraph posts in a train! How immensely long the seasons of childhood were, yet now a year seems to count for nothing; and I love life so much that it is rather terrible to have the beautiful days race away so fast. I spent last Easter in the Cotswolds with two perfectly cheerful and good-tempered younger friends. It was one of those rare holidays when everything went well from start to finish; day after day entirely happy and delightful; and, what is more rare still, I knew that it was delightful; and yet it is gone and can never come back; and when one is fifty, and finds oneself heavier, slower, more elderly every year, one knows that those blessed intervals are precious things indeed.

That is one of the puzzles, why one is pushed and driven along so fast through the days, with everything hurrying and hastening to some undreamed-of goal. The strange part of it is that one is given the power of imagining that it might be permanent and everlasting. One sits in the

sun, the breeze coming sweet through the sweet-briar bush, talking idly with the friend, who understands perfectly, of memories and plans, of things and people. The kitten wanders about exploring the laurels with a fearful joy, and coming back at intervals for a little sympathy. A chaffinch on the ivied wall chirps and chuckles at intervals, with a tiny torrent of song. So surely it might be for ever? A carriage drives up, some one crosses the lawn; one has to go and be civil to some callers to whom one has nothing to say; the post comes in and there are a pack of letters to answer. Is it always to be so? Can one never have the peace one dreams of?

Well, I do not know! On a day like this, when I walk in the quiet woods, I am conscious of a strangely double nature at work within me. On the surface there is a busy brain, full of ideas and plans and work, thinking out little problems, devising replies to troublesome questions, doing other people's business, finding endless things to do, struggling to put ideas into shape. Much of it does not seem particularly worth doing, I confess. A good deal of it seems like the trouble which nations take in increasing armaments in the hope of never having to use them. If one could clear away all the unnecessary work of the world, be content with simple shelter, well-worn clothes, inexpensive meals, a few good books, one would have time to live; and then suddenly, as one reflects, one becomes aware of a self which

lies far deeper than the busy brain; a self which goes quietly and slowly on its way, doing its own secret business; something very old and simple and straightforward, which listens to one's restless plans and schemes as one listens to the talk of a child, and knows that its real life is not there. That deeper, inner self is what loves and lives; it does one's feeling for one; those strange deep attractions which one feels, not too often, for other people, which seem so inevitable and instinctive, so far removed from any question of duty or reason, these come from the inner self; and that deeper self, too, is what cares with a kind of intent passion for certain scenes and places. If I go, for instance, to beautiful mountain country, my upper mind is stirred and pleased and amused by the strange forms of the hills, their craggy faces, their sweeping moorlands, their falling streams, but the inner self is silent and unmoved; and yet when I come to walk as I walk to-day in English country, with wooded valleys, broad ploughlands, pleasant homesteads, old cottages, the inner sense is all alive, loving the scene with a quite unintelligible passion, crying out constantly with a deep emotion; and yet I can give no sort of reason for its fancy. I have no associations with the spot, except that I have lived there for a few years; yet the inner sense seems at home, and embraces all the circle of the hills with a hungering kind of love that would kiss the very soil, so dear it is.

That inner self is the spirit of man, I think, with a long life behind it and before it; one cannot mould it or control it; it is oneself; it commands and does not obey, it lives and does not reason. I do not care if my brain dies, if I lose even my treasure of memories and hopes, if I forget my labour and suffering; for the inner self hardly suffers at all; its joy and its serenity are troubled by the sorrows and pains of the body, but only as the wind ruffles the surface of the sleeping lake.

When it comes to the deeper thoughts of the soul, it is the outer self which investigates, perceives, argues, weighs, presents its case; but it is the inner self which chooses, and which knows what belongs to its peace. Why we go astray, why we are suspicious, contentious, ill-humoured, wrathful, is because we learn, too many of us, to live in the outer part of our minds. Much of our unhappiness in the world comes from mistaking where our real life lies. It is easy to make this mistake, if our outer thought is vivid and strong; and the unhappiest people are those who are always urging the suggestions of the outer thought against the dictates of the inner soul. What we have to try to do is to live more in deep, strong, satisfying things; to live more by instinct and faith, and less by argument and scheme. For it is certain that to live too much in our outer consciousness is to lose time, to delay our progress; we must dare to trust the



inner serenity, to act as our heart tells us to act, not to be afraid of quiet and simple life, not to let our reason and our imagination terrify us. Then our life attains its true proportions; and we can heal the fret of life, by a wise passivity, a receiving of quiet impressions, by trusting the strong and untroubled soul within.

I was talking only yesterday to a wise and tender-hearted physician, who has been a true friend to me for many years. He was telling me of a talk he had been having with a brilliant man of science about the origin and development of life. "I said to him," said my friend, "that he might push back the process of life to the ultimate jelly of protoplasm, the cell which just multiplies itself and does no more; there you have it, the primal vital impulse—the indestructible force of life! One cannot trace it back further, but it is there, and no thought can obliterate it. It exists—it cannot end or begin; it is just the thought of God."

These words came into my head as I walked to-day; it was the thought of God! It was round me on every side, in the woods and fields, in the air and light, that vast force of life: I was of it, included in it, moving with it. How vain was my reluctance, my timidity, my forecast of death, my output of schemes and plans! Every single power and quality that I had, it was all a gift, a thing made and moved forward, a force imperishable and indestructible. Could I not re-

joice in the thought, in the richness of experience, the beauty, the interest, the emotion, the energy of it all? "Yes, a thousand times!" said the spirit within me. "Move onwards serenely, cast aside regret, cleanse and purify life, only be undismayed and hopeful, as you turn page after page of the revelation of God. That is the meaning," said the soul, "of the infinite desires you feel, the emotion that would embrace everything, the love that you would offer to all hearts, if you could but draw near to them."

And I think that my spirit spoke truly, for I realised that it was a larger voice that I heard than any message of my own that I could devise.

And here I think that one's will can help one; one can determine to cast out of one's life the petty and distracting cares that bring one down so low; one cannot avoid them, of course; but one can look through them and past them, not linger over them, not get entangled in them. One must take life as it comes; but one must not be taken in by it, must not make claims or recriminations, must not be dissatisfied or jealous or solemn about it; it is easy to feel that one has missed opportunities, easy to grudge the successes of one's comrades, easy to think one has not had fair chances; but that is all a false valuation; it is part of the deceit which the outer self weaves over its work, like the web of a spider over a window-pane. Every one has the chance of experience, and the simpler the materials are, the

less temptation is there to be deceived. We are here to learn rather than to teach to perceive our losses rather than to reckon our gains.

"Yes," a reader may say, "it is easy enough for a comfortable and well-to-do person, in a quiet country house, to write thus. What does he know of life's difficulties and troubles?" Well, I can only say quite plainly that I have had plenty of tragic material in my life—sorrows, failures, long and disabling illness, disappointments, fears, miseries. I believe that poverty is the only human trouble I have not had to bear. I have not found life easy or triumphant; and I may say humbly that the only ease I have ever had is the sense that I have been borne along, with all my little dilemmas, all my faults and failures, in the great and merciful hands of God; and now I am not happy so much as interested, because I do believe with all my weak heart in the richness and greatness in store for every single one of us that moves beneath these dark skies and through these uncertain days.

Yet here I am in the springtime with everything jubilant, thoughtless, deliciously alive about me. What folly, nay worse than folly, to cloud the soft and serene air with regrets, questionings, repinings! If we can but pierce through the outer crust of things, we shall find the clear water of life moving below; we are in the city all the time, made musical with the sound of waters, whose foundations are wells of living

light, if only we have eyes to see it. Here and now is our joy, in every act and word, if we can but trust the inner life, the inner heart; if we can but neglect the voice of fear and the deceitful whispers of the world, and see that what matters is that we should fill up with wise patience the little gaps of hope, as we walk together, quietly and cheerfully, along the heavenward road.

## ON BEING SHOCKED

MANY years ago I had a friend with whom I used to discuss all sorts of things with entire freedom—books, people, places, events, ideas. But soon after we left the University, a change took place in him. He fell under certain influences—I need not say what they were; but I became gradually aware, in meeting him, that it was becoming increasingly difficult to talk over questions with him. He began, I thought, to draw a line round many things. If it was a question of talking about events, he would say that he did not like gossip; if a person was mentioned, he would say that So-and-so was his friend, and he would rather not criticise him; if ideas came up, he would say, with obvious emotion, that the particular thought was a very sacred one to him, and that he must be excused from arguing about it. This was not done dogmatically or fiercely, but gently and even shamefacedly. The result, however, was that our intercourse lost all its frankness, and for me most of its pleasure, and faded away, as pleasant things must sometimes fade. I do not think our mutual regard was altered. I would

have trusted him implicitly, and, if need had been, I would have made any call upon his friendship, dictated or allowed by affection, with a perfect confidence that it would be generously met; and I am sure he would have done the same with me.

But the freedom of talk, of discussion, of statement was gone, simply because I was always afraid of wounding some susceptibility or touching some shrinking emotion..

I do not say this to prove that I have retained an open mind, and I am quite prepared to believe that he is right and that I am wrong. The question really is not to what extent one is entitled to hold things sacred, because I do not dispute any one's right to do that; but to what extent one is entitled to claim the silence of others, or their assent to what one holds sacred. The point is whether one loses or gains by such a process, and whether one may claim to hold opinions in such a way as to entitle one to disapprove of or to be pained by any species of disagreement.

Of course, it is all a question of where the line is to be drawn. No one could possibly claim to hold *all* his own beliefs, opinions, and views so sacred that he could not bear to have any of them disputed or called in question. I doubt myself whether it is wise or right to hold any opinion at all so sacred as to claim that no one shall venture to disagree with it; there are many things in the world that must be only a matter of sub-

jective opinion, and of which no objective proof is possible. Some of the best things in the world—religion, beauty, affection—are of that nature. One may have a serene and unshaken conviction on these points, and one may desire with all one's heart that others may share one's conviction. But, after all, they are only deductions from one's own experience, and others may have different experiences and draw different deductions. It seems to me that no advance is possible, if any one can claim to be infallible. When it comes to discussing an opinion, I am disposed to give full weight to anything which may be urged against it, and I wish to hear any valid objection to it. I may be converted and persuaded, but I do not mean to be dictated to. I do not think it is desirable, on any subject in the world, to make up one's convictions into a bundle, as early in life as possible, and to admit of no rearrangement or addition. The true consistency is not to hold to an opinion, but to be ready to change it, if one sees reason to do so.

Many of the things that my friend said to me in the old days were true and fruitful; I saw his point of view, and perceived that he had reasons on his side; but one never arrives at any comprehensiveness at all if one cannot admit of any compromise. I remember one argument I had with my friend when the ground was getting limited. I said to him, "I do not agree with your opinion, as I understand it. If you will

explain it, perhaps I shall feel differently.” “No,” he said, “I can’t explain it. The thing seems to me so unquestionable and so sacred that I cannot even risk speaking of it to any one who does not share my conviction. It would be a kind of profanity to express my thoughts on the subject.”

That seems to me like a deliberate sacrifice of all frankness, a decision that one will not share or compare one’s experiences at all. We must be all agreed that there is a great and deep element of uncertainty and mystery about life. One’s own experience must be limited; and the only hope of getting at anything real is not to measure everything by one’s own rule and line, but to see how others make their measurements. The people I have got most out of in every way are the people with clear minds, who are willing to listen to one’s own views, and to say frankly what they themselves think. Impatience, contempt, derisiveness, are the qualities which hinder and obstruct. What helps things along is frank sympathy, and the recognition of the right of others to differ from oneself.

But then it may, of course, be said: “Oh, but if one feels strongly about a subject one must be allowed to express oneself strongly—that is how moral victories are won!” I do not believe it. It may be good for a weaker nature to follow in the track of a stronger will for a time. But the essence of life and progress is some time or



other to have real opinions of one's own, and not to have adopted the opinions of others wholesale.

And so I believe that if a man finds himself increasingly impatient of opposition, more inclined to accuse of stupidity and irreverence those who hold different views, more liable to be shocked, he should not welcome it as a sign of a firmer grasp of principles, but as a sign that he is losing the power of brotherly and Christian sympathy. The danger and the injury of dogmatism is so awful, the power it has of alienating others, the selfish withdrawal into some private stronghold of thought which underlies it, are so disastrous, that its apparent gains are not to be reckoned in comparison with its inevitable losses.

But will not, it may be said, this attempt at comprehensive sympathy weaken our decisiveness and our resolution? Not at all! It is the highest sign of strength to be chivalrously gentle; and in order to be potent, strength should be unconscious of itself. The moment that we feel that we can bend others to our will, that we can silence them, that we can make them act as we wish, that moment we are in the grip of a terrible temptation; and what makes it the more subtle a temptation is that we may be so conscious of our own pure and high intentions. We may have to act decisively and firmly, but if we extort submission, we must be careful to give our reasons; and if it is sometimes inevitable that we should insist upon obedience, we ought to recognise

that it is obedience and not agreement that we demand.

And then, too, what havoc it makes of real relations with people if this closeness of thought prevails! I am not speaking of mere acquaintances, with whom some reticence must probably be practised; but even there I am not sure; I think that the closer one can get to all people, the more one can open one's mind and heart to them, the better for us all. What a comfort it is to meet a man or a woman, and to find that one can dispense with all the posturing and fencing and the other practices of polite society, and talk at once openly and frankly about the things for which one cares. People who can do that have a simply marvellous power of evoking the best out of other people. No one wants to live in an unreal world; the caution and timidity which we feel and show is all an old survival from the time when life was made up of strife and enmity, and when one dared not say what one felt or thought from a savage kind of fear that it might be used against one. A certain amount of this reticence is inevitable in the case of young people, because young people are more merciless and more derisive, and altogether more uncivilised than older people. But as one gets older, the more one can dispense with false shame and selfish caution and mistrust of others the better.

I sat the other night at dinner next a famous man; he was perfectly courteous and kindly, but

he would not show me what was in his mind at all; perhaps he thought me impertinent or indiscreet for trying to turn the talk on to matters of intimate belief and opinion. I do not know! but he uttered no sort of personal preference and made no frank admissions; till I felt at last that I might as well have sat by a fine statue, all marble within. And then, as good fortune would have it, I fell in after dinner with another man, famous too, who engaged with ease and humour and zest in a pleasant discussion about the due balance of society and solitude, and said a whole host of refreshing and charming things, which did me good to hear, and some of which I hope to remember. He did not give me the impression of reflecting whether I was too unimportant a person to be made the recipient of his confidences. He just made the most of an easy human proximity, and shared his experiences and beliefs frankly and charmingly, so that I recognised at once a fellow-pilgrim, who knew himself to be bound upon the same interesting, wonderful, delightful, mysterious journey as myself, and who was ready to beguile the tedium of the way with discourse of adventures and hopes and desires. To meet others cheerfully, directly, unsuspectingly; not to be anxious to make one's own opinions prevail—that is the secret of all the influence worth having.

## HOMELY BEAUTY

OUR code and schedule of beauty is, I often feel, a very formal affair. Either we are afraid or ashamed to differ from received opinions, or we have never thought of revising the code we adopted in our youth, or we do not really look at things, or we do not care about beauty at all. For one or other of these very insufficient reasons, we go on dully and tamely, trying no experiments, indulging heavy habits of thought. I, who hold inconsistency to be a high virtue—by which I mean the power of changing one's mind for sufficient reasons—think it a real duty to try to have new points of view, and to be constantly taking stock of opinions, to see if I really hold them, if they really grow there, or if they have only been stuck into my mind, like flowers into a vase.

Now Ruskin made such an outcry against all factories and foundries, all places where labour is applied on a large scale, involving high chimneys and torrents of smoke, that the average Briton takes for granted that the whole thing is ugly and horrible. I am inclined to believe that

this is a gigantic mistake, and that there is a very real majesty about these big structures, with their volleying chimneys, their long rows of windows, their grumbling and rattling gear. They are quite unpretentious, in the first place. They make no attempt to conceal that they are doing the work of the world. It may be dirty work, but it has to be done, and thus they have the first beauty of appropriateness. They are like great fortresses of industry, and have all the solemn effect of size. I do not think they would be improved by having rows of Gothic windows and a chimney built like Giotto's campanile, because they would be pretending to be something else. It rather sickens me when I hear enthusiastic people compare the tower, let us say, of the town hall at Siena to a lily on its stem. It is a tower, and it ought to be like a tower, and not like a lily, the architecture of which is quite a different affair. I think it is quite fair to put a little ornament into a chimney, and a smooth cylinder of white brick, a mere tube set up on end, is almost too-business-like an affair, though I am not at all prepared to concede that it is necessarily hideous. There is a chimney in London, of some electrical works, I think, near Regent's Park, which has a graceful floriation of masonry at the top, which I think is a very fine thing indeed; and on a sunshiny morning in London, when it is volleying steam, and stands up over that soft golden haze which

one sees only on a bright day in a many-chimneyed town, it has a charm about it which one need not go to Italy to capture.

But I should like to take a much more homely and workaday affair than that. If any one who reads these lines knows the London and North-Western Railway well, he will remember, on passing out of Carnforth Station, an immense factory, which I believe to be an iron-foundry. It is a collection of great iron towers, stained and streaked with red dust, with strange conglobations of huge tubes, wheels whirring on lofty stages of spidery rods, high galleries, long shoots, towering scaffolds, all rising above clustered sheds and sidings and piles of ore and shunted trucks. At night it is ablaze with great fires roaring and streaming into the air. The place by day is grim, gaunt, filthy, laborious-looking. To a mild literary man like myself, it is an entirely mysterious building; I have no idea what all the tubes, cisterns, wheels, scaffoldings mean; but it is plain that something very real and vigorous is going on there. It seems to me to have a beauty of a very real and impressive kind. It is enormously big and imposing, the shapes are grotesque, bizarre, almost terrifying. It has a real solemnity—I had almost said sublimity—about it, with its plated iron towers and its frenzied apparatus. It stirs many emotions—wonder, amazement, and the fear, as Ecclesiastes says, "of that which is high." The very outlines of it

have a majesty of their own. I only know that I look out for it with delight, and rivet my gaze upon it as long as it is visible.

When I aired these views to an accomplished woman of my acquaintance who lives in the Lake country, and who has a real passion for hills and crags and running waters (to which I also lay claim), she shrugged her shoulders, smiled, and said I was too fond of being paradoxical. I could not persuade her that I meant what I said. She finally alleged that the fumes killed the vegetation all round, to which I replied that the entire earth was not meant to be covered with vegetation, and that after all it was only what farmers did in a different way.

I do not mean, of course, that I want to intrude iron-foundries into all the loveliest places of the earth. Such a building would not look well between Rydal Water and Grasmere; but that is because it would interfere with the harmony of the scene. But such buildings have their place, and I contend that in their place they are, or can be, beautiful.

I travelled the other day on a misty morning from Cambridge to St. Pancras. At Cambridge, close to the station, is an immense mill, consisting of two many-storied buildings of white brick, now much weathered, connected by a high gallery. The architect has put a little finish into them, and one of the buildings terminates with a classical pediment which has real grace. But I

am sure that the building has a fine quality of its own, given by its height, its size, its purposefulness. At least I feel the beauty of it—I suppose that is the most one can claim—and I think that other people would find it beautiful too, if it were not the dull fashion to think otherwise, and therefore never to look at it with the idea of being pleased by it. All that journey was full for me of the same sort of beauties. The great black mouths of tunnels, solid-arched, low-hung, with the steam floating about them, the huge gas-reservoirs, standing up inside the filigree screens of ironwork; the vast span of St. Pancras station—and I am sure, by the way, that the St. Pancras Hotel is a building which with an added touch of age will be a thing which travellers will come from far to see; all these things in the misty air had a real grandeur, and grandeur not diminished for me because they stood for work and life and energy, and were not lazy, luxurious, artistic affairs, built to please the eyes of leisurely persons.

There is a huge factory near the line—I do not remember exactly where—which has a prodigious tower of wood, stained and streaked with the drippings of some boiling fluid, which seems to me to be a really magnificent affair in outline, structure, and texture; and I believe that if one only can regard it candidly and expectantly, one can detect, and be impressed by, its artistic quality.



I do not mean that one should exactly set up factories as rivals, for æsthetic sensation, to Gothic cathedrals. Ely, rising on a spring morning above its apple-orchards, is a lovely object enough, though I am barbarous enough to object to its fussy lantern, and to believe that nothing at all can justify and nothing but age make tolerable, rows of Gothic pinnacles—spikes of stone grotesquely and fretfully crocketed. The vast western tower of Ely, so quiet and dark and simple, is worth fifty churches in the decorated style, which I believe to have been truly decadent in its avoidance of plain spaces, and its packing of every inch with restless and often unmeaning ornament. And at Ely I can see a real beauty in the great polygonal brick water tower, with its intricate arches and severe outlines.

I am sure it is a dilettante business to confine our sense of beauty to Gothic vaultings and traceries, lovely as they often are. I believe in my heart of hearts that classical architecture, such as St. Paul's, is a finer, nobler, more stately thing, in its solid appropriateness to human need, its grave dignity, than any Gothic building, which is often in fact a kind of confectionery in stone. As one gets older one loves plainness, simplicity, proportion, stillness, usefulness, better and better, and comes more and more to mistrust ornament and decoration. But the point is to enlarge and extend our sense of what is beautiful and grand. Of course when one is dealing with things

like pictures, stained-glass, wood-carving—all the minuter and more delicate works of the human hand and mind, one is face to face with a different question. They are deliberately ingenious and fanciful things, and grace is the first quality we demand of them. But when it comes to buildings, we are brought into touch with a different range of emotions; we must think what they mean, what they stand for, what part of human life and toil they represent. And I for one think an old homestead, among its ricks and barns and byres, a far more beautiful and moving thing than an elaborate manor-house or villa, in park or garden, because the latter stands for idle leisure, and the former for human life and work. The things that are made for use are what please best, and not the things that are made for pleasure; and if the homely things have just enough touch of beauty about them to show that the maker loved his work, and took a pride in it, and desired to make it seemly as well as useful, then I think we have the most moving quality of all.

When one sees, in Northern or Western river valleys, old factories of mellowed brick, with quaint wooden galleries above the stream, with white casements, and perhaps a pretty pillared cupola for the bell, one sees at once that they are altogether pleasing and harmonious things, and the dirt and litter of them a perfectly natural and not ungraceful mess; I suppose that the cultured dilettantes of the day, when such places

were built, turned up their noses at them and thought them horrible. We are, of course, very much at the mercy of antiquity just now, and even if we build a new building, we do all that we can to render it old in hue and shape; but I think that is a false and mean standard. If a place is solid, strong, and perfectly adapted to its purpose, there is no reason whatever why it should not be beautiful; and I am not being in the least paradoxical when I say that as I pass through the manufacturing districts of England I see many buildings of a perfectly commonplace kind, huge cubes of brick, with tiers of windows and a great chimney towering over all, which give me a sense of real pleasure and satisfaction, because the thing is there for a purpose, and has been planned and built with that purpose in mind.

I do not hope to convert every one to this view; but I claim to have this advantage, that I have a wider range of pleasure thus than if I simply thought the whole abominable and hideous, and pined for waterfalls and peaks. Let me be more honest still, and say that though mountain scenery has an ineffable charm, it seems to me to have also a certain intoxicating quality which is not purely wholesome; I weary of it far sooner than I weary of a simple pastoral country, with woods and pastures and hamlets. Of that I cannot conceive ever wearying at all. The English village, as one sees it here in Cambridgeshire, with its orchards, its white-walled thatched cottages, its

simple church, its manor-farm, with the pastures all about it, and the pure line of the low wold above it, seems to me the sweetest and tenderest kind of thing that one can see anywhere, because it has all grown up so gently and naturally out of human love and toil, in the quiet places of the earth. But even so, I stick to my factories too, because they have grown up naturally enough, and are knit up with human life and endeavour. This is not a plea for one sort of beauty as against another; it is only a plea for men and women to use their eyes and hearts a little more simply; not to be deluded into thinking that beauty lies only in costly splendour and elaborate ornament, but in the frank expression of use and order and work, and all the other simple elements which make up life and peace and happiness.

## BRAIN WAVES

I WAS sitting a short time ago reading a letter in an arm-chair. Close to me at my left hand was sitting a friend at a desk, writing. I said to him, "I have just had a very interesting and pathetic letter from B——." He stared at me for a moment, with a look of such surprise, that I said, "What is the matter?" He said: "This is really too extraordinary; I had not thought of B—— for months. But the moment you began to speak, before you mentioned his name, it darted into my mind."

This is only a rather striking instance of a phenomenon which probably most people have, at one time or other, experienced; a direct communication of thought, without any verbal interchange, with some friend or acquaintance. The particular form in which I often experience it is to think persistently and without any obvious reason of some friend whom I perhaps have not seen for weeks, and on the following day to receive a letter from him. But it takes place most frequently when one is in close proximity, and many people must know how one often, in talking

with a friend, anticipates his unuttered thought. This latter phenomenon may no doubt partly arise from familiarity with a friend's method of thought, and be of the nature of unconscious inference.

I think it may be said that no reasonable person who cares to study the transactions of the Psychical Society can possibly doubt that this force, which is now scientifically called telepathy, exists, though at present we know very little about it. It seems clear that if several people attempt to focus their thought upon some pre-determined object, and to read it into the mind of one who possesses the telepathic faculty, the latter can reproduce a sketch of the object which is unmistakable, even though the person acted upon may not be aware what he or she is drawing. There is one recorded experiment, which appeared to me, when published, to be entirely convincing. The party agreed upon the object which they wished to have reproduced. The medium, a girl, was then introduced. In a moment she drew on her paper a thing like a melon, with an elongated stalk. She then drew four parallel lines roughly down the centre of it. She then hesitated, and finally drew, on each side of the melon, but outside of its boundary line, a large capital S. She had not the least idea what it represented. But the object which had been agreed upon was a violin. The melon and stalk were the instrument, the four lines were the

strings, and the letter S was the cuts, which are roughly like that letter, and are to be seen in any violin placed on each side of the strings, for the sake of resonance. One could imagine the unpractised operators going over the details in their minds. "There is the violin and its handle; there are the strings; there are the two cuts, like the letter S, on each side of the strings." The point is that though the scrawl was in itself unintelligible, yet all the salient features of the instrument were rudely reproduced.

The thing itself is not nearly as antecedently incredible as the telephone or the Marconigram. If a man had prophesied a hundred years ago that one could hear a friend's voice through a wire across the Atlantic, or that without any connecting wire an electrical message could be shot into the air and picked up by another isolated machine many miles away, he would have been considered a ridiculous romancer. And yet it is not inconceivable that, if the laws of telepathy are developed and investigated, two people may some day be able to exchange thoughts at a distance without visible or audible symbols. The appearances of people to their friends at the moment of death, a phenomenon the recurrence of which is quite beyond the possibility of scientific doubt, is a manifestation of the power. We know nothing of the medium of communication, or of the conditions under which it is possible,

but it would seem that some harmony or sympathy of thought is an essential basis, a fact which has its material complement in the harmony of the Marconi apparatus.

When the first experiments in electricity were made, there were a number of scattered phenomena, such as the lightning, the attraction of rubbed amber, the sparks of the cat's back, which were all familiar and all unexplained. No one had ever thought of attributing all of these to one common cause, while no one dreamed of the possible adaptability of the underlying force to human uses. If some one had suggested that the force evolved from the rubbing of amber, for which the Greek word is ἤλεκτρον, would some day drive engines, light houses, and transmit instantaneous messages from continent to continent, he would have been considered a mere fantastic dreamer. It may well be that phenomena quite familiar to us now, such as national movements, the panics that spread like lightning through a crowd, the therapeutic influence of suggestion, the effects of mesmerism, may all be the result of some extensive spiritual force, the developments of which may have extraordinary and momentous effects upon the human race. I have no sort of doubt myself that we are on the eve of very curious discoveries in the psychical region, which may ultimately revolutionise our ideas of character-development and race-progress. But, on the other hand, I think that the investiga-



tion of these deep secrets must be left to trained scientific intellects. They are not things for amateurs to dabble in. All the ill-advised tampering with occultism, all attempts to arrive at conclusions by impulsive short-cuts, all rash experiments with psychical forces seem to me not only risky, but positively dangerous. It resembles the meddling of children with corrosive acids and deadly poisons. It is very easy indeed for a weak and credulous nature to bemuse itself into a condition of fantastic susceptibility, which may wreck both intellect and happiness. The forces, whatever they are, are deeply mysterious, but their exact limits will probably some day be known and defined. They are not ascertained, but they are doubtless ascertainable. I believe myself that all tampering with the phenomena of so-called spiritualism by unscientific and sensitive people is both a symptom or a cause of morbidity, and should be, as far as possible, resisted and checked. On the other hand, I think that honour is due to those of trained observation and well-balanced minds, who set themselves seriously to obtain and investigate such evidence as is available.

On the other hand, it is perfectly justifiable for people of special temperament, not indeed to court such experiences, but to record them as faithfully as they can. Indeed, if a psychical experience befalls an entirely sane and normal person, it is advisable that it should be

carefully noted and sent to the Psychical Society, which undertakes the investigation of these problems.

My own belief is that just as our globe has a material connection, so that the displacement of the smallest particle has an actual effect upon the whole mass, there is probably also a spiritual connection, so that every thought we think and every idea we conceive has some effect upon the whole spiritual community. We can no more be isolated in mind than we can be isolated in body; we feel, indeed, our own separate existence; but every individual's bodily frame is acted upon by a whole host of attractions and vibrations of which the individual is not conscious. If I raise my finger, the world is different from what it was a moment before. So in the spiritual region. If I think a good thought, or if I think an evil thought, the benefit and the mischief are not confined to myself, but the thought sends a ripple, however inconspicuous, through the spiritual horizon. The limitations of will, of impulse, of thought, of prayer, are unknown to us. But however fruitless the thought or the prayer may seem, its vibration passes on its viewless flight through the spiritual substance of eternity. We dare not say that every prayer must find its material fulfilment; the interplay of spirit and matter is too complex for that; but it cannot fail of its spiritual effect, whatever that effect may be. And if the loneliest soul on earth, lying in darkness

of spirit and pain of body, breathes one voiceless prayer upon the night, the world can never be the same as though that prayer had been unprayed.

## FORGIVENESS

I HEARD a sermon preached in a parish church the other day by a young curate, one of the most beautiful sermons in feeling and in form, both for its fine emotion and for its restraint of language, which I have heard for a long time. But the preacher took up a position which I will not say that I contest, but which I cannot understand.

It was a sermon on forgiveness. God, said the preacher, freely and entirely forgives the sinner, and yet He exacts the full penalty for sin.

I found myself wondering whether the word forgiveness could apply to such a transaction. Forgiveness, in the human sense of the word, means precisely the opposite. It means that in spite of some offence, the man offended against does not exact his due; that he forgets and puts out of his thoughts the offence, and reinstates the offender, just as though the offence had never been committed. To forgive a man a debt is to release him from the necessity of payment; and I cannot call it forgiveness if a man says to a debtor, "I freely and frankly forgive you the debt, but of course you will have to pay every

penny of it." That does not seem to me the kind of forgiveness indicated in the Gospel. In the parable about the lord and the debtor, when the man says, "Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all," he is not merely given extra time in which to pay his debt, but he is at once and entirely forgiven the whole debt without the suggestion of repayment. But when the man, instead of showing mercy, extorts his own petty debt from his own humble debtor, then he is penalised indeed! The words of the Lord's Prayer closely correspond to this: "Forgive us our trespasses, for we also forgive them that trespass against us." It cannot surely mean that God forgives us our sins, if we forgive those who sin against us, but that He exacts the whole penalty for sin, while the essence of our forgiveness is that we should not exact it? It cannot be that our human forgiveness is meant to be absolute, while God is justified in conceding only a moral forgiveness? Should we hold up as a type of Christian forgiveness the case of a man whose son, we will say, had stolen some of his money, if the father were to say to the son, "I forgive you the theft, but I shall hand you over to the police, and the law must take its course"—should we call that forgiveness?

And then, too, as far as the world goes, no one can maintain that sin is evenly and justly punished. Carelessness is often very heavily punished indeed, while deliberate cruelty, if it be carefully

concealed, may escape all punishment. The cautious and hardened sinner may avoid detection, and even the consequences of sin in this world, while some foolish and ignorant boy may commit a single sin, the results of which may blacken all his life and blast all his prospects. I have met with such a case myself, and all I can say is that if that sin deserved so awful a punishment, the punishment in store for cold-blooded, deliberate, and prudent sinners must be something too terrible to contemplate. Nature, of course, does not always punish sin; what she does punish is excess; and she punishes the ignorant transgression of her laws just as sternly as she punishes a deliberate infringement of them; and yet we must believe that the law of Nature is a law laid down by God.

Consider, too, the case I have just cited; the wayward boy drifts into sin, and finds his life is to be maimed and overshadowed by the consequence of it. He begs and implores God for forgiveness. What is the comfort, if he is told that God says, "Yes, I forgive you if you repent, but you must go through life suffering shame and misery for your offence"? Perhaps he has been led into sin by more hardened offenders, whom he sees living in tranquillity and prosperity, and how can he believe in the justice of that? How, in fact, are we to reconcile the truth that God, in Nature, punishes some careless single sins, and even some trifling neglects so terribly, and yet seems to have no wrath for a sinner who is wary and prudent?

I think it is a great and a fatal mistake not to face a problem like this. It is not the least use to pass it over in the mind, and to lay hold of some vaguely comforting assurance. If we act thus we are apt, when we are really confronted with the problem in a concrete form, to find the whole of our faith crumbling down about us, and leaving us helpless and not certain of anything.

I think that the only way to meet it is, in the first place, not to compare our own case with the case of others at all. Our own case is the only case of which we know the data and the circumstances; and it is rare, I think, to find people who, as a matter of fact, feel that they have been unjustly treated by God. It is rather the other way; and I have often been surprised at finding people whom I should have expected to murmur against the dispensation of God, tranquil, and even grateful for their sufferings, when they have seemed to myself unduly severe.

And, in the second place, we must try with all our might to believe that the chastening of God is not a cruel or fortuitous chastening, and that in all suffering we can find an opportunity of gaining something for our souls which we can gain in no other way. I do not know anything which I have more certainly derived from observation and experience than the amazing benefits, not only in character but also in actual happiness, which suffering brings to people. The patience, the courage, the sympathy which spring from it!

And then, too, the soul has a most blessed power of obliterating even the recollection of past suffering, as if it had never been. One looks back to a time which was full of anxiety and even pain, and can remember nothing of it but the joyful and beautiful things.

And thus we must hold on fast to the fact that God's forgiveness is a very real thing, and not a mere dramatic thing; and that if we have to suffer what seems a disproportionate penalty for our fault, it is not sent us because God is merely an inflexible exactor of debts, but because by exacting them He gives us something that we could in no other way attain to.

Where we go wrong is in comparing God to a human disciplinarian. If a father says to a son, "I forgive you, but I am going to punish you just the same," we may frankly conclude that he does not know what forgiveness means. The fact that he punishes merely means that he does not really trust the son's repentance, but is going to make sure that the son's repentance is not merely a plea for remission. We have to act so, or we believe that we have to act so, on occasions, to other human beings; but it is only because we cannot really read their hearts. If we knew that a repentance was complete and sincere, we should not need to exact any punishment at all. But with God there can be no such concealments. If a man repents of a sin and puts it away from him, and if none of the dreaded consequences do



befall him, he may be grateful indeed for a gracious forgiveness. But if the consequences do fall on him, he may inquire of himself whether his repentance had indeed been sincere, or only a mere dread of contingencies; while if he is penalised, however hardly, he may believe that his sufferings will bring him a blessing, and that by no other road can he reach peace.

What is hardest of all to face is when the sin of a careless father or mother seems visited upon an innocent child. That does indeed seem a thing behind and beyond all human conceptions of justice. But it would not be so if we could look upon suffering as a gift of God. We must indeed use all human skill and knowledge to abate and remove remediable suffering, or else we can be landed in sad sophistries, and even think ourselves justified in inflicting suffering on others because of its beneficial results.

And the last mistake we make is that though we most of us profess a faith in immortality, we do not really believe it. We confine our ideas of the justice of God to the tiny brief span of human existence. If we could only realise that it is all a much larger and wider and more remote matter, we should take our difficulties and troubles much more tranquilly and serenely, and learn to wait.

And for practical action, we must, if we would be like God, forgive frankly and completely. If we act as though we believed in the entire sin-

cerity of a man's repentance, we do more for him and for ourselves, even if we are disappointed a dozen times, than if we say we will make sure, and exact our due. That is not the forgiveness of Christ at all. We must not say, "I have forgiven you a dozen times, and each time you have offended again; this time I can trust you no more." We must rather bring ourselves to say, "I have been disappointed a dozen times, but this time I trust your repentance." It may be said that this is mere weak sentiment, but it is wholly false and base to describe it so. It may be foolishness to the world, but it is the power which wins souls. I do not mean that it must be done without any common sense and wisdom; but even when it is so done, it is a nobler and a purer thing than a suspicious mistrust. The considerations that we ought to punish for the sake of example and deterrence, that the offender will be better for punishment, and so forth, must be very carefully and sincerely scrutinised, that we may be quite sure that our own personal vindictiveness is not dressing itself up in specious reasons. I remember well at school being punished for some infraction of discipline by a master who disclaimed all sense of personal offence, but who was yet, I felt sure, glad to punish because he was revenging himself on me for his own sense of injured annoyance. It gave me a feeling of real humbug when he said that it gave him pain to inflict punishment. That I knew was not true,

and I ended by feeling that older people were not trustworthy in such matters.

And thus, if we make up our mind to punish and to exact our due, where we can, we had better not talk much about forgiveness. The two can hardly be brought together. The best way of forgiving is often enough to forget, or at all events to behave as if we had forgotten; and perhaps the largest and sweetest solution of all is to act in the spirit of the old French proverb, which says, "To love is to pardon everything."

## SELF-PITY

WE all know the story of Narcissus who caught a sight of his own face in a woodside well, where he had stooped to drink, and who was so much enchanted by his own beauty that he spent the rest of his perhaps fortunately brief life in admiring it. A parable of complacent vanity! But it has been left to our self-conscious age to invent a still more ingenious form of self-adoration. It is not only now the Pharisee who is in love with his own nobleness; but the publican is intoxicated with his own humility and abjectness. This is very different from the elaborate sorrows of a mediæval penitent, like the Abbot Turgesius of Kirkstall, whose grief over his sense of sinfulness seems to us exaggerated. "His compunction," says the old Chronicle, "knew no bounds. In common conversation he scarcely refrained from weeping. At the altar he never celebrated without such a profusion of tears that his eyes might be said to rain rather than to weep, insomuch that scarcely any other person could use the sacerdotal vestments after him." What wonder if, after nine years of this lachrymose rule, the

poor monks of Kirkstall felt that they wanted a man of business at their head!

But, after all, the tears of Turgesius did correspond, I suppose, to a sense that he fell far short of his ideal. There is a much more subtle kind of lamentation nowadays. I will not go so far as to say that our modern development of the art of self-pity is a common thing exactly, but there is a good deal of it about, and the essence of it is a kind of complacent misery, a sense of superiority and distinction at having more and graver troubles than other people, and a greater sensitiveness about them. I remember meeting with it once in the case of an old lady, who died years ago, whom I used to know. She had a good many troubles, and I suppose that the method she chose of meeting them was an instinctive effort of the mind to relieve itself. She could not forget them or remove them, and so she took the line of being intensely proud of them. She could not hear of a disaster without saying that it was nothing to what she had to bear. She did not seclude herself in melancholy reserve; she was rather fond indeed of society, and liked nothing better, when she saw that all were enjoying themselves, than to burst into tears and say that it reminded her of all she had lost. She was, or had been, a tender-hearted woman, but I do not think she ever enjoyed herself more than when she sat down to write a letter of condolence to some bereaved person. This parade of grief

used then to afflict me, but I know now—and I say this not at all cynically, but with perfect candour—that it was her way of turning the tables on her sorrows, and that she got as much interest out of the little drama as other people get out of other poses. She thought herself a romantic and interesting figure, overshadowed by a mysterious and impressive affliction. What she did not perceive was that strangers who met her thought her dismal, and that her own immediate circle found her partly tiresome and partly grotesque.

Of course, the truth is that the condition of self-pity is a morbid one, and that a person suffering under it is as much worthy of pity as anyone who is afflicted with any other disagreeable complaint. It is like shyness—it is not the least use to laugh at shy people and tell them that it all comes of thinking about themselves; that is the disease itself. Shyness is a very unpleasant and hampering malady, but no one deliberately makes up his mind to be shy. The only cure for shy people is to encourage them to take an interest in external things, to use other parts of their brain, because when we know more of mental and moral physiology we shall find, no doubt, that shyness means some disarrangement of brain molecules, some unsheathed nerve, which prevents a man or woman from acting simply and confidently, as healthy people act.

Self-pity is really nothing more than ordinary

vanity turned inside out. The vain person, whatever he hears or sees, is bent on favourable comparison of himself with others. A man who is vain of his appearance is pleased to find himself among deplorable-looking people; and if he has an uneasy suspicion that some one is handsomer than himself, delights to say that beauty does not depend upon correctness of feature, but upon expression. So, too, the self-pitying man is occupied in always measuring other troubles against his own, and if the trouble of another is obviously greater, he falls back upon the superiority of his own sensibilities.

I think that the complaint is more common among women than among men, though when a man has it it is generally very bad indeed, because men are generally more positive than women. I remember an old gentleman who was fond of appearing at his own dinner-table with an air of mournful resignation, and helping the rest of the party to soup, but waving away the proffer of a plate for himself. Then there arose a chorus of condolence from the female members of his party, to which he gravely replied that he hoped no notice would be taken of him, that he had no appetite for dinner, but that he preferred to keep his anxieties to himself. Then he was coaxed and implored to make an effort for their sake; until with an air of infinite magnanimity he helped himself to soup, and generally ended by making a remarkably good

dinner, due tribute having been paid to his sensibilities.

But the reason why, as a rule, men are less liable to the disease than women is simply because as a rule they have more to do, are compelled to go out to business, to meet other people, and so are insensibly drawn out of themselves. But lonely women or feminine households, with few visitors and scanty external interests, with little to do except to pass the hours between meals, and plenty of time for brooding, are apt to fall a prey to these fancies; and especially does it happen in the case of bereavements, where true affection dictates a false loyalty to the dead, and where prolonged grief seems to be the obvious proof of faithful love. But as Mrs. Charles Kingsley once said to a friend, with splendid emphasis: "Whenever I find myself thinking too much of Charles, I read the most sensational story I can find. Hearts were made to love with, not to break!" That is a true and a gallant saying!

But if anyone can once realise that this kind of morbid sensibility is a disease, the cure is possible, though difficult. It is of little use to analyse an illness, unless one is prepared with some suggestion as to its remedy. The remedy in this case is at all costs to find an interest, or at worst, a duty. If a person in this condition takes up a definite piece of work, and if possible a piece of work which involves relations with other people, and pledges himself or herself to it



in a way that makes one ashamed of neglecting it, the disease may be fought and conquered. It is a medicine, and often a very disagreeable medicine. Those involved in the luxury of grief think that allowances should be made for them, that they are not equal to action, that they can be of no use. Let them try! Let a woman, for instance, take up a perfectly definite piece of work, the more congenial, of course, the better, if it be only the anxious care of some one other human being. In every smallest village there is some one who can be watched and tended; and then human relations have a marvellous way of broadening and extending; the flame leaps from one point to another; and thus the thing becomes dear and desirable; or even if it does not, there is always a pleasure in carrying a matter through, in following out a programme.

Of course, people in real and great affliction cannot always be hurried. But the time often comes, as every doctor knows, when a strain or a lesion is healed, but the habit of lameness or incapacity continues. I was told an interesting story the other day of an old Canon of a cathedral who sank into great depression and could perform none of his duties. He sat day by day trying to read or write, lost in melancholy. The months went on, and his doctor became aware, from certain unmistakable signs, that the attack was over, and yet it seemed impossible to rouse him. One morning a messenger came in to say

that the only other Canon in residence had been suddenly taken ill, and that there was no one to preside at the service. The old man got up from his chair, said, "I think I can manage it," put on his surplice and went in, and to his amazement found that he could take his part in the service with enjoyment; from that moment he was restored to health and activity.

This is the truth which underlies Christian Science, that we can most of us endure and do more than we feel we can; and there is nothing so potent in dispersing nervous terrors as to drag oneself to the scene of action, expecting to break down, the result being in nine cases out of ten that what breaks down is the nervous terror.

It is not wrong to be attacked by self-pity any more than it is wrong to have a cold in the head—both are the result of some sort of disorganisation of the frame. What is wrong, in both cases, is to allow oneself to be incapacitated by it. What would help many people out of the self-pitying condition would be to realise how ugly and ill-mannered and boring a thing it may become. A display of tragic grief at a moment of mental agony is a very impressive thing; but one cannot be harassed beyond a certain point; and the complacent display of artificial misery is as objectionable a thing in the moral world as is the habit of incessant sniffing is in the physical region. It may be very comfortable to sniff if

one feels inclined; but what sniffers do not realise is that, instead of evoking sympathy, they evoke nothing but a sort of contemptuous irritation in others. Christ advised people who were tempted to parade their prayerfulness in public, to go home and shut the door; the same applies to genuine grief, and far more to indulged grief. Of course no one who has had much experience thinks that the world is a wholly easy or comfortable place; but by indulging self-pity, one lessens rather than increases one's capacity for endurance. A century ago it was the fashion for a certain type of woman to faint as much as possible in public, and a power of unlimited swooning was a matter of pardonable pride. But when it became clear that other people were frankly bored by having to attend to rigid females, the tendency died out, to reappear in subtler forms. To indulge self-pity is not only an abnegation of courage; it is an insult to the great, interesting, exciting world. If life means anything, it means that we have the chance of a certain amount of experience, and a certain length of road to cover if we will. But if we take our seat by the roadside, our face covered by our hands, shaking with sobs, to excite the interest and sympathy of other pilgrims, we run the risk of delaying too long, and at last, when we uncover our besmeared countenance, we shall find that the pilgrims are out of sight, and shall have to trot after them in the twilight in a very

helpless and humiliating fashion, when we might have walked in true company, and had the pleasure of honest talk and pretty prospects by the way.

## BELLS

WHEN we were living at Lincoln, now nearly forty years ago, where my father was a Canon, we children had a pleasant custom that when we were all at home together, the first day of the holidays, we should borrow my father's pass-key to the cathedral, and go to the great bell-chamber of the central tower, just before noon, to see and hear Great Tom strike the hour.

We used to convoy the party to the little door in the south transept that admitted one to the winding stair. How cool it was in there, with a pleasant smell of stone, and into what silence and darkness it conducted us! Up and up we went. Now there was a sudden peep out of a loophole on to house-roofs and gardens and sailing birds; then there was a long gallery to be threaded, in the triforium, with pits of darkness, in the upper surface of the aisle vaulting, on either hand; then another stair—we were in the great tower now. Then a dizzy balustraded gallery, in the lantern itself, from which we could look down into the stacked organ-pipes below and see the choir laid out like a map. Then further

stairs, and at last a key was turned and we were in the high, dusty chamber itself, with its great tie-beams and cross-rods, its litter of jackdaw nests, and the golden light filtering in through the slanting louvres of the windows.

The bells themselves lived in a great railed cage, into which we could also penetrate; but we were getting anxious now, as the hour drew near, and the great clock ticked the minutes away. Someone would tell the legend of the unhappy man who determined to stand inside the bell when the hour struck, and fell to the ground after the first stroke, with the blood gushing from nose and ears—an entire fiction, no doubt! And now there was silence.

There was Great Tom himself, swung on his monstrous wheel, on the one side of him a huge black hammer for the hour, on the other side another hammer, with a leathern strap round it, for ringing a muffled peal if any dignitary of the church died. A little beyond were the two bells for the quarter chimes, big enough, but as nothing beside the bulk of Tom. Then perhaps a nervous sister's heart would fail her, and she would seek the shelter of the staircase. At last the watches pointed to noon; suddenly came a click. Pulled by some mysterious agency, one of the hammers of the small bells was jerked backwards, poised, and fell with a crash, the others following suit. That was deafening enough, and it was four times repeated. Then came an awful pause, while the

echoes died away. Great Tom was very deliberate and took his time about striking. It was almost more than mortal nature could bear to await the moment; but at last the great hammer quivered, was agitated, drew itself back, and then fell with a tremendous shock and an outrushing wave of sweet sound. Sometimes one fled before it; but it was worse in the staircase, where the echoes came and went like resounding waves; and I grew to think that the clash of the small bells was more terrifying than the solemn thunder of Tom himself.

How often, too, in the little mullioned bedroom of the Chancery, which I occupied with my brother, looking out on Minster Green, at some dead hour of a gusty night, used we to hear the solemn shout of the great bell come swinging over the house-roofs!

I do not think there is anything which so identifies itself with the spirit and memory of a place as the sound of some customary bell! At Eton, the great, school clock has a strange cracked quality, I know not how produced, which it is almost impossible to identify on a piano. How well I remember the first bewildered night I spent there as a small boy, with all the vague terrors of the unfamiliar place upon me, and how the great bell, not so far away, clashed out the hour of dawn, when one had to bestir oneself and plunge into the whirling tide of new faces and mystifying duties! I little thought, when I heard

it then, for how many years of my life there, as boy and master, it would tell the happy and the busy hours, or with what inexpressible emotion I should hear it beat out the last hour of my life of service there!

What poignant feelings, too, are aroused by a cheerful peal of distant church bells floating melodiously on a spring morning over green woods and blossoming valleys! It is very hard to analyse such vague reveries as they arouse—a half-recovered freshness, a surprising joy; like the notes of the cuckoo, they transport one back as by a charm into the old unreflecting childish mood, when life was all full of new experience and joyful energy; or the sound of bells clashing out above, as the wedding procession comes out to the porch, with the organ humming within; or when the solemn tower takes voice, in some moment of lonely waning light, and beats out the news of the departure of a spirit voyaging to the unknown; or when it beats, at slow and reluctant intervals, as the funeral pomp draws deliberately nigh.

One of the many charms of Cambridge is that it is a city of many bells; there is the beautiful familiar chime of St. Mary's, and at night the curfew is still rung there, by kindly custom, to guide belated travellers home across the fen. The bells of King's College are not solemn enough, though endeared to me by use; the chapel bell is not serious enough for the occasion, and the



clock there utters a trivial and even waspish note. Trinity has a new and very stately chime; and then there are innumerable other voices of stricken metal, in towers and belfries, down to the great chime of the new Roman Catholic Church, which plays a strict old ecclesiastical melody, hard to recapture, at every quarter. Yet how often the day passes, and one is not even conscious of having heard a bell, much less of having been disturbed by one; for the brain has a singular power of taking no notice whatever of a familiar sound and a recurring note, so long as it has nothing of human unaccountableness, of irregular volition, behind it.

The voices of bells certainly belong to the peaceful sounds of life, and mingle themselves with the characteristic atmosphere and quality of a place and a life. And then, as I say, they have the magical power, when heard after a long interval, of suddenly touching with vividness and reconstructing the old sense of a forgotten hour:

“The times when I remember to have been  
Joyful and free from blame.”

One of my great pleasures at my little college here is that I have lately been permitted to hang in the quaint hall belfry a bell, of a soft and silvery note, on which the clock now strikes the hour; and two lesser bells for the quarters, the three to sound the subject of that wonderful

Prelude of Rachmaninoff's, which will be familiar to all who go to St. Paul's Cathedral, where it is sometimes played.

What I like about it is the thought that the three bells will, it may be hoped, become a part of the memory of the place. Up till now there has been a shrill, light-minded bell, which has had neither dignity nor resonance, a mere time-teller. But it is a pleasure to think that the new bells may weave themselves into the delights and activities and dreams of the generations who will hereafter go in and out; and that coming back a score of years after, the sound of the familiar chime may bring back sudden retrospects of the little vivid court full of sunlight, the voices of forgotten friends, the old plans and designs, the old energies and brightnesses of the unshadowed life. One cannot live in retrospect; but however strongly the new tide of activities may run—and as life goes on, the tide does run more swift and more absorbing—it is good to be recalled in spirit to the earlier days, that we may see how far our hopes have fulfilled themselves, and whether or no we have been true to our purposes. This is not a mere sentiment; it is facing life largely and fully, and let us hope gratefully; and only thus does one draw near to the secret and the mystery of it all, realise its significance, and even discern that it is but a prelude to the greatness as yet unrevealed.

## STARLINGS

I SPENT some time to-day watching an innumerable colony of starlings, who were picking over a field where some sheep were penned. The starling as a bird is an interesting study; he has a very prettily marked coat, with all sorts of unexpected gleams and glooms and iridescences in it. He suits his colours to the day. On a grey, dull morning, the starling is habited in decent pepper and salt, like a respectable farmer; on a day of sunlight, he has the changeful sheen of the dove, the radiance of the rainbow, the broken lights of spilt petrol! Then his bill is so sharp and long, and used so vigorously, that it is a pleasure to see him at work. He never takes anything quietly or tranquilly. He is always in superlatives. He is for ever in a tremendous hurry and fuss, frightfully hungry, desperately busy. He goes about as if he were catching a train. He eats as if it were his first meal for weeks, and his last chance of food for a month. And then he is a most dramatic bird. If you throw crumbs out on a lawn, the robin arrives first in a disengaged fashion, hops about admiring

the view, and finally decides he may as well have a mouthful. Then the sparrows bustle down, and gobble away in a jolly, vulgar fashion. Then the finches alight in a gentlemanly way, and pick up their food courteously and daintily. Suddenly there is a flutter of wings, and a starling or two descend out of breath, in wild terror and excitement, as if they had to choose between a violent death and death by starvation, and they had decided to risk the former. They snatch up all they can, and fly in furious haste.

When they roost, they are apparently only afraid of being bored. They chirp all together like Italian canons saying vespers against time; and the moment they awake they begin to practise all kinds of quaint imitation of sounds they have heard. Life is a very strenuous business with them.

Some years ago I spent a winter in Scotland at a shooting lodge. The starlings had taken a fancy to roost in a little island on a lake, which was overgrown with thickets of rhododendrons. They used to begin to assemble about four o'clock as the day began to fade. Those that arrived first used to fly round and round in a circle over their roosting-place, and all the newcomers joined them in their airy dance. As the sun set, one used to see troops arriving from every direction, until at last there was a dense mass of birds all on the wing, flying round and round over the island. From a mile away one could see the mass

like a great shifting, shadowy balloon, now densely packed, now bursting out at the top or the side like a waving flag. At last, when the muster was complete, at some given signal, they sank silently on to the island. A minute or two were spent in finding their perches, and then arose a wild din, a sort of evening hymn, every starling shrieking its loudest. After a few minutes again, as though by a signal, the noise suddenly stopped, not gradually, but like steam shut sharply off. Then, if one came close up and clapped one's hands, the whole company opened cry, and the great mass shot up into the air with a roar, to resume their evolutions, sinking down to roost as soon as the coast was clear.

To-day, as I watched them, I saw that while there were hundreds on the ground making a thorough investigation of the field, several trees close by were crammed with birds, and humming like gigantic tea-kettles. I crept up to the hedge to watch them, and they continued to feed for some time, but suddenly one of them scented danger. As if at a word of command, the whole company, several hundred in number, rose into the air; all those in the trees swooped out to join them; and the whole mass flew over the adjoining hedge to continue foraging on a safer fallow.

Now this signal that is given is probably clear enough to the birds. But what entirely beats me is how they manage their evolutions. They fly at

a prodigious pace in open order, they all keep their distances, there is never the least sign of any collision. The method is perfectly incomprehensible. It is impossible to divine who settles the pace or the direction. Yet the whole rout will execute a simultaneous wheel when on the wing without the smallest sign of confusion or of dislocation. It is all very well to say it is instinctive, though I suppose that a young starling when he joins the territorial force finds these evolutions perfectly easy. But the whole thing implies an extraordinary number of mental processes, quick observation, rapid inference, instantaneous calculation, and the most complete subordination to some sort of guidance. It is impossible to see whether any particular birds take the lead; it does not seem so, because, as the great company settles in a field, the birds in the rear, when the leaders begin to pitch, fly over their heads and settle too in what must be a perfectly definite and preconcerted order. And if one puts up the birds again, those in front, which have a minute or two before been in the rear, rise up and seem to take the lead. The whole thing is, in fact, a most complete and organised system of drill of a very delicate kind. I once saw a mass of starlings in full flight suddenly confronted, as they came over a hedge, by a boy who emerged from behind a haystack. They were close upon him when they perceived him. One would have imagined that there would

have been some confusion owing to the sudden check; but instead of this, the whole flight went up straight into the air, keeping their places exactly.

I remember once, when I was a schoolmaster, having to preside over the evolutions of a big company of small boys, and the desperate difficulty that there was, in spite of their extreme willingness to manœuvre, and their anxiety to perform the process right, to get them to do anything of the sort with any precision. They simply could not keep their distances. If the front line was suddenly checked, the back line rushed into it, while if anything in the least complicated was attempted, the whole body were in confusion at once. Yet the boys understood perfectly well what was wanted of them, and presumably had as much intelligence as the starlings.

That is the extraordinary thing about animals, that their reasoning processes seem so extraordinarily perfect within certain limits, and so very helpless in other directions. They take an immense time to acquire new instincts, and yet, on the other hand, they seem very quick at picking up new ideas. Partridges, for instance, have learned not to fear a railway train passing. You will see them in fields beside a line, sitting perfectly still close to the roaring train. They seem to have learned that no danger threatens them, and the result is that they are absolutely unconcerned. Yet the same birds will fly backwards

and forwards over shooting-butts, season after season, and never learn that there is anything dangerous to be avoided. Even a bird which has been wounded at a butt will fly with the covey a week or two afterwards over the same butt. I suppose that in the course of time they will learn to differentiate between the beaters and the guns. But it is very strange that their reasoning processes are so incomplete, while their instincts are so remarkably delicate and skilful.

I remember once watching a hen to whom had been confided a big brood of partridge-chicks. She was intensely solicitous about them, and furious if one came too near the coop. The little creatures themselves recognised her as their mother, and fled to her for safety. Yet in a week she had killed them all by treading upon them; and, indeed, I saw her crush one to death in the endeavour to protect it from my dangerous proximity!

But the commonwealth of starlings is productive of still more interesting reflections. They are extremely quarrelsome and selfish birds. If one of them finds food, a dozen will rush in and tear it away. They have not the slightest respect for each other's rights; and yet with all their individualism they are the most entirely gregarious of birds. Their sense of the community and their desire for each other's company is quite irrepressible. They have a strong idea of imperial federation, and their subordination to some



kind of leadership must be complete. Yet they seem to be entirely lawless among themselves, to be at perpetual enmity with each other.

I suppose that this is the sort of community which may be the outcome of Socialistic principles, if the wrong type of person gets the direction of the movement. The starlings in their way are a very satisfactory kind of community. They are healthy, sensible, greedy, and strong. None of them ever seem out of sorts or out of spirits. If a weak starling has a tit-bit taken away from him by a strong one, he does not waste time in brooding, or impugning the justice of existence. He hurries away to find another morsel. Then, too, their intuitive subordination is complete. They do not seem to be conscious of the pressure of social problems. They are on a splendid level of common sense and activity. It is true that they are a thoroughly *bourgeois* type. One cannot imagine a starling singing under the moon, in a fine rapture, like the nightingale. They work hard for their living, and when they are at leisure, as in the early morning, they amuse themselves by impudent imitations of things in general, like healthy people who work all day and find amusement in the evening in the club and the music-hall. They are eminently courageous and humorous; but the lark and the nightingale, solitary souls, have a certain secret joy in the beauty of life, which one cannot imagine the starling sharing. They no doubt consider the lark a fool for

spending his time and strength in singing and soaring, and as for the nightingale, they would no doubt despise a bird which wasted time that might be devoted to refreshing sleep in ecstasies about the moon and the garden-scents.

I am not wholly on the side of the starling. Their life is very well organised, very busy, very sensible. They combine in a remarkable way a devotion to their own interests with a sense of civic duty. I admire their admirable evolutions, and envy their entire disregard of any kind of privacy. But the starling is only a jolly school-boy when all is said and done. He obeys orders, he enjoys his food. He is not so dreadfully business-like as the bee, nor so helplessly gregarious as the barnacle; but he is a conventional wretch for all that, and I should be sorry if humanity developed on his good-humoured lines.

## MOTTOES

I HAD occasion the other day to attempt to identify an unnamed portrait. There was nothing to help me but the motto, "*Patior ut potiar*"; "I suffer that I may obtain." I turned over an immense number of heraldic mottoes in search of it. The Peyton family bears the motto, "*Patior, potior*": "I suffer, I obtain." It ultimately turned out to be the motto of the Spottiswoodes.

I was struck, I confess, on passing in review several hundred mottoes, to find how flat they generally are. They are very often platitudes of the deepest dye, and have nothing salient or distinctive about them. But they cast a curious light on the English character. It never occurred to me before what a very real and vital test of our national motives and temperament such a collection of maxims supplies, but, if one thinks of it, a man who is going to take a motto probably makes some attempt to sum up in it his experience of life, or at all events, if mottoes are suggested to him, he is not likely to adopt one which does not seem to him to represent his own philosophy. Now in studying these mottoes of

great English families, I was struck with several things. They dwell very much upon virtue as the basis of success, a good deal upon honour, and upon being true to one's word. Many of them are distinctly religious and Christian; the cross of Christ is not infrequently named in them, generally in cases where the chief of the bearings is a cross. But they are not, as a rule, idealistic or imaginative or poetical or suggestive; they are sensible and straightforward and rather materialistic. They take many of them very decided views of the sanctity of property. Thus Lord Zouche's motto is, "Let Curzon hold what Curzon held." The motto of the Riddell family is, "I hope to share." The De Tabley motto is "*Tenebo*," "I will retain." The Denny family bears "*Et mea messis erit*," "And the harvest shall be mine"; while the Ecklin motto is still more outspoken—" *Non sine præda*," "Not without the spoils." Again, the De Traffords have a fine old predatory motto, "Gripe, Griffin, hold fast!" On the other hand, the Grevilles bear the motto, "*Vix ea nostra voco*," "I scarce can call it mine"; and the Cowpers have the beautiful and solemn motto, addressed, I suppose, to God—" *Tuum est*," "It is Thine."

Some of the most impressive mottoes are those which consist of single words. The Duke of Hamilton has the motto "Through"; Lord Hawke has "Strike,"—a very appropriate motto for a famous batsman! Lord St. Vincent has the word

"Thus," which has a very stately air of high-bred satisfaction. The Aylmer family bears the motto "Hallelujah," and the Marquis of Aylesbury has the pathetic word "*Fuimus*," "We have been." The last motto is an ill-omened one. I suppose the idea was that the annals of the house were a part of history; but the Latin word has always the signification that a thing is over and done with.

There are many very interesting *punning* mottoes, with a play upon the family name. Thus the Wolseleys (Wolves-ley) bear "*Homo homini lupus*," "Man is as a wolf to man"—a grim maxim. Lord Fairfax bears "*Fare fac*," "Speak and act"; the Monsell family has "*Mone sale*," which means "If you give advice, do so humorously," or "Warn with wit." The Vernons have the motto, "*Ver non semper viret*," which may mean "Spring is not always green," or "Vernon always flourishes." The Beauchamps bear "*Fortuna mea in bello campo*," "The lot is fallen unto me in a fair ground"—the *beau champ* of the name. The Fortescues have "*Fortescutum salus ducum*," "The strong shield is the captains' safety." The Doyles have a very curious motto, "Doe noe yle (ill) quoth Do-yle"; but the most ingenious of all is the Onslow motto, "*Festina lente*," which means "Make haste slowly," or "On slow." The Cavendish family has the solid maxim, "*Cavendo Tutus*," "Safe by being cautious."

Perhaps one of the most curious of all mottoes is that borne by Lord Erskine, no doubt invented by the first peer, the witty and fanciful Lord Chancellor, "Trial by Jury." The Dashwoods have the constitutional motto, "*Pro Magna Charta*," "For Magna Charta."

Then there are a number of fanciful and often very beautiful mottoes. The Egertons have "*Sic Donec*"—"Even thus, until"—which is a fine aposiopesis. Lord Gough bears the splendid motto, referring to his great victory, "Goojerat, clear the way." I suppose that this refers to some celebrated order given by him on the occasion. Then there is "*Comme je trouve*," which is parallel to "*Si je puis*," which last was adopted by William Morris. The Anstruthers have "*Periissem nisi periissem*," which, I suppose, means, "I should have perished if I had not persevered," or it may be that it signifies, "I should have lost my life if I had not lost it." Lord Halifax bears the contented motto, "I like my choice." The Maxwells have the pretty maxim, "Think on"; and the Montefiores the still more beautiful one, "Think and Thank." The Byrons have the grand war-cry, "*Crede Byron*," "Trust Byron." The Yarde-Bullers have the curious phrase, "*Aquila non capit muscas*," "The eagle does not catch flies"; the De Bathes have the rather cynical phrase, "*Nec parvis sisto*," which seems to mean, "I don't stick at trifles." The Ouseleys have a very curious motto,

"*Mors lupi agnis vita*," "The death of the wolf is life to the lambs." The Peeks bear the beautiful words, "*Le maître vient*," "The Master cometh." Lord Deramore has "*Nocte volamus*," a reference to the bats' wings on his arms. Lord Donington has the pathetic motto, "*Tenebras meas*," which perhaps means "Lighten our darkness." The Duncombes bear "*Non fecimus ipsi*," "We did not achieve it of ourselves." The Aylesfords bear the beautiful motto, very hard to translate, "*Aperto vivere voto*," which means "To live in all sincerity." The Duke of Marlborough has, I think, a Spanish motto, which means "Faithful though disgraced." Lord Carlisle has the very pathetic motto, "*Volo non valeo*," "I desire but I cannot perform." The Cadogans carry "*Qui invidet inferior est*," "He that envies is the lesser man."

Of the Christian mottoes which I mentioned, Lord Basing bears a Greek motto, which language is rarely used, "*εἰ μὴ ἐν τῷ σταυρῷ*"—"Save in the Cross,"—the words, "God forbid that I should glory," being understood. The Lechmeres have the singular phrase, "*Christus pelicano*," "Christ in the pelican," with reference to the old tradition of the pelican feeding her young with her own blood. Lord Clarendon has the strange motto, "*Fidei coticula crux*," "The Cross is the test of faith"—*coticula* meaning a stone used for testing metals.

Enough has, I hope, been said to show the

interest and suggestiveness of these pretty summaries of life and hope. I do not attach too much importance to them, but I should value the possession of a fine mysterious old family motto, which one could hold on to in one's heart as a comfort in perplexity and as a sort of battle-cry when effort was needed. My father used as a young man to bear the beautiful motto, "*Luce Magistra*," "With light as my guide"; but when he became Bishop of Truro he took out a new patent of arms, because there seemed some doubt as to his right to the arms he bore, and he then went back to a fine old French family motto, "*Fay bien crain rien*," which I have carried about with me engraved on a gold ring for so many years that it is now nearly obliterated. It is an inspiring thing, I believe, to have a great, wise, encouraging maxim to which one succeeds by inheritance, and by which one can try to regulate one's conduct. That may be a feeling apart from common sense, but the mind and heart are much affected by these symbols of great truths, which can consecrate one's hopes in the old knightly fashion. The truth is that sentiment does play a far larger part in the world than we are most of us willing to admit. A great many men and women are sustained in life by a vague sense of the superiority of their family traditions to the traditions of other families. They would disclaim this if they were directly taxed with it, but the fact remains that they secretly believe



that their ways of doing things, their dress, their deportment, their recipes, their furniture, indicate a self-respect which the arrangements of others do not so clearly bespeak. And thus, though family pride may be a limited and unsympathetic affair, yet it is really a very active force in the world, and leads people to act, from a principle of *noblesse oblige*, in a way which on the whole encourages dignity and decorum. We are swayed more by instinct than by reason in the affairs of life, and happily for us the reason which would in public discount, let us say, the sentiment of a family motto as a bit of unnecessary emotion, is overcome by the instinct which leads us to feel that our family traditions expect a certain nobility of action from us, and to condemn ourselves in secret, if we have fallen short of the standards in which we have been nurtured.

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## ON BEING INTERRUPTED

I SUPPOSE that for busy people there are few of the minor ills of life that are so hard to bear philosophically as unnecessary interruptions. Here is a case in point. Some little time ago, I had secured, I thought, one evening, a couple of hours to finish off a bit of work which had to be done by a certain time. I had just got into the swing of it, when a man whom I know only slightly sent in his name, asking if he might speak to me for a moment. I had been in correspondence with him about fixing the date of an engagement some weeks ahead. I had suggested three possible dates, and all that he had to do was to select one. He came in with a leisurely air, said that he happened to be passing through Cambridge, and thought it would be so much more satisfactory to *see* me. "It is so much easier," he said, with a genial smile, "to settle these things at an *interview*." He then produced my letter, and gave me, at much length, a number of excellent reasons against two of the dates I had proposed. I said that it was all the same to me, so we would fix the third of the

dates. He then said that he was very much interested in the matter that was going to be discussed on the occasion, and that he would much like to have an opportunity of hearing my views on the subject. He then occupied over half an hour in giving me his own views on the question, which differed from my own; but when I attempted to meet any of his points he held up his hand and said, "Pardon me—I should just like to finish my statement of the case; I shall deal with that objection in a moment." So it went on, and at the end of about an hour, he said: "Well, I must not take up your time any longer; I am very glad to have had this opportunity of discussing the question frankly." Then followed a little talk on general topics and a few civilities, and he finally took his departure with much courtesy.

It is no doubt unreasonable and ungenial to object to this polite kind of brigandage! I feel ashamed to reflect how much annoyed I was by the invasion. Yet I am sure that the worthy man meant well. I have no doubt he thought in a general way that he was saving me the trouble of writing a letter, and he also wished to have the opportunity of airing his views on the particular subject. It had not, I am sure, occurred to him that a letter could have been written in two minutes, or that I might not desire to hear what he thought on the question. Yet to put the matter in the most concrete and commercial light,

he was depriving me not only of time, but actually of money, by his call. The work I was doing was wage-earning work; and this is the disadvantage of being a writer, that people are apt to think that writing can be done at any time. One would not venture to treat a doctor or a lawyer so.

This particular case is no doubt an extreme one, but I do not see how I could have met it. It would have been uncivil to refuse to see him, and he would have felt himself discourteously used if I had said, like Archbishop Laud on a similar occasion, when the two gentlemen of Wiltshire called upon him, that I had no time for compliments, and left the room by another door.

Of course, as a general rule, one must allow for a certain inevitable amount of interruption. As a college official, I know that, day by day, a certain number of points are bound to turn up, which involve one's suspending whatever one has in hand. One is rung up on the telephone to fix an engagement, some one wants to borrow a book, a proof comes in to be corrected, a man comes in to see about hanging some pictures in the library—every one knows the sort of trivialities. One takes such things as part of the day's work, and deals with them as mechanically as one opens an umbrella if it comes on to rain. But the sort of interruption which one entirely grudges are the things which take up time and patience and do not seem to have anything to justify them. I remember my father, when he

was Archbishop, saying that the sort of thing he found so hard to understand the use of, was when he spent the greater part of the day in travelling to fulfil some social or ceremonial engagement, "when for all the good I did I might have been a stuffed seal!" A day gone in travelling and in vague civilities, with perhaps an opportunity of making a ten minutes' speech! I think that he perhaps naturally underestimated the effect that his presence probably had in giving a stimulus to the particular enterprise. But when, day after day, pressing business has to be laid aside, when no leisure can be obtained for quiet reading or for thinking out an important matter, then it must be difficult for a busy man not to say to himself, "To what purpose is this waste?"

In the case of a man like my father, who worked, when left to himself, with an almost destructive energy, I have little doubt that these distractions were really a blessing, because they gave him a compulsory rest. But there is a further point which is worth considering. There is no form of self-discipline to be compared to that which can be practised by dealing with little tiresome engagements and interviews and interruptions in a perfectly tranquil and good-humoured way, giving the whole of one's attention to the matter in hand, and not allowing the visitor to feel that he is being hurried or that he has intruded. I remember that Bishop Wilkinson said

with great sternness to a friend of mine, who had been late for an engagement, "You ought to be punctual; but if you are not punctual, you must not allow yourself to be fussed, or you commit a double fault. Now that you are here, we will both discuss the matter as carefully and deliberately as if you had been in time."

After all, few people's time is as valuable as all that! We are not put into the world to carry out our own programme exactly and precisely, but to rub shoulders with other people, to increase our sympathies, to make others feel at ease, to add to the general geniality of life. We must not, of course, allow casual encounters with other people to thrust our particular bit of work into a corner, or, like an acquaintance of my own, go about paying calls and complaining that our social engagements leave us no time to read or think. But we are in the world to live, and interruptions, as we call them, are part of life.

I do not think there is anything which is more gratifying and encouraging than to have an interview with some busy public man, and to find him, to all appearances, kindly, amiable, and leisurely. I had to see the head of a great department the other day on a small point of business. I know what his work is, and I did not wish to take up his time. But instead of a brief and severe interview, I came away feeling that I had made a friend. The great man had thrown himself back

in his chair, had dealt in a few words with the points before us, and had then talked genially and interestingly about the further issues raised, inviting criticism and weighing suggestions. As I went out another visitor was shown in. I do not know if the minister was bewailing his hard fate inwardly, but there was not a sign of anything but goodwill and interest in his kindly smile, his pleasant handshake, and his courteous invitation to me to interview him again if the matter proved not to be perfectly clear.

The important thing is not to lose our hold upon life; it is a great temptation to busy and energetic people to overvalue their work and to undervalue their relations with others. But routine-work is not necessarily valuable, except in so far as it is a discipline against restlessness, in so far as it steadies and strengthens character. No one can avoid drudgery, but on the other hand mere purposeless drudgery is not valuable at all; it consumes energy and it diminishes vitality. Nothing is so clearly stated in the Gospel as the principle that we ought not to get immersed in the details of life so as to lose sight of higher and wider things; and a man who gets so attached to routine-work that he cannot bear the smallest deviation from it, is little better than the miser who can think of nothing but his money; both the drudge and the miser are infected by a perverted virtue: the one begins by believing

in economy, and both end by becoming mere machines.

Interruptions, then, are often but the influx of the tide of humanity into the ordered life. The danger nowadays is that we all tend to become specialists; and specialism unduly pursued means a loss of due proportion. A father who is so busy that he cannot find time to see anything of his children, however exalted a view he may take of the dignity and importance of work, is really not doing his duty at all, but sacrificing duty to inclination. Horace says that it is pleasant to play the fool in season; it is not only pleasant, it is a plain Christian duty to cultivate affectionate relations with others, and to contribute one's share to the genial current of the world. I remember an excellent schoolmaster who was very anxious on principle to make friends with his boys, but if an old pupil dropped in to see him, he fidgeted in his chair, hummed and hawed, glanced at his watch, kept the papers he was correcting in his hand, and gave such a sense that his precious time was being wasted that the attempt was seldom made a second time. The other day I had a severe lesson myself, which I hope to take to heart. A colleague of my own at Cambridge said to me that an undergraduate would like to consult me on a small matter. I said, "Why does he not come to see me?" The reply was, "He would like to, but he is afraid of interrupting you." I quite appreciated the



courtesy and consideration of the young man; but for all that I look upon it as a severe and probably merited criticism, and I do not relish a compliment to my industry at the expense of my humanity.

The gist of the whole matter is that we must teach ourselves to regard interruptions not as necessary evils, but as welcome links with the world. We must court them rather than resent them, and we must practise, as far as we can, the art of never being preoccupied or hurried or snappish, remembering that however important our work and occupation may seem, we are human beings first, and that no ideal, however zealously pursued, can supersede the claims and the duties and the amenities of life.

## DEMOCRACY

It is recorded that some one, talking to Archbishop Tait about Church affairs, used the phrase, "the present crisis." "What crisis?" said the Archbishop; "there has always been a crisis in Church affairs, ever since I was old enough to remember." The same is probably true of all affairs, political as well as ecclesiastical. But the interest, and perhaps we may add, the anxiety of the present crisis in politics is simply this. The people have not been given power, nor have they exactly taken it—they have simply found out how to use the power they have long had; and the question is: How is this going to affect our social life? That is the only interest that there is in politics for ordinary people. What most of us desire is to be as free as possible to live on the lines we desire, and to be governed as little as possible. Politics are no doubt an excellent and exciting game for the people who have a hand in them. But the less need there is for politics, the happier a State is. If everyone were rational and considerate and disinterested, there would be no need for politics at all.

The ordinary man is no more interested in technical politics than he is interested in culinary processes. What he wants is a well-cooked dinner at a reasonable cost; and as long as he gets that, he cares very little how it is prepared. If his dinner goes on being ill-cooked, and still more if it continues to be expensive as well, he may go into the kitchen and kick the pots and pans about, and even dismiss the cook; and in politics that is a revolution. But what the ordinary man wants is to get the most and the best out of life. The worst of it is that the process of getting the most out of life in many cases involves other people in not getting anything out of life except unpleasant drudgery: and it can hardly be expected that the drudges should acquiesce. There was once an aged nobleman who closed his park to the public because he said that it fussed him and destroyed his sense of privacy to see anyone within five hundred yards of his house. He had a perfect right to feel like that, and if he could, to secure his own comfort; but if everyone in an over-populated country felt the same, it is evident that there would not be enough privacy to go round.

The object, of course, of a State should be to secure the welfare of the many at the cost of the least possible inconvenience to the few. There must, of course, be inconvenience from time to time. If a man in a town has small-pox, it is no doubt much pleasanter for him to be nursed

in his own home; but the community have a perfect right to compel him to be moved to an isolation hospital. They cannot be expected to subordinate their unwillingness to catch small-pox to his claim for personal comfort. Of course, it involves a certain injustice if a majority of people have to coerce a minority. But it is plain that it is at least more fair than that a minority should coerce a majority. The duty of the State is to give all its members equal opportunities, to reward them according to their merits, to safeguard the weak, and to aim at educating everyone to take a reasonable, sensible, and good-humoured view of the rights of others.

Probably the interests of the State are best served by encouraging all individual talent and enterprise as far as possible. The more that people have motives for exertion, for making the best of themselves and their talents, the wholesomer and stronger the State will be. If it attempts to subordinate people too much, to claim the same amount of the same kind of labour from everyone, no matter what their dispositions and faculties may be, one gets a kind of lifeless socialism which is fatal to vitality and progress. Charles Kingsley was once travelling in the United States and met a newspaper editor who said to him: "Mr. Kingsley, I hear you are a democrat. Well, so am I. My motto is, 'Whenever you see a head above the crowd, hit it.'" "Good heavens!" said Kingsley, commenting

upon the remark, "what a ghastly conception of human equality, to attempt, not to raise every one to the level of the best, but to boycott all force, all originality, all nobility, and to reduce all to a dead level! If that is democracy, I am no democrat!"

I was talking the other day to a well-known man, who said to me that he was perpetually surprised and interested by the very feminine view which his wife took of politics. They had been reading some political speech or other, and his wife made a depreciatory criticism. "I see you are not interested in democracy," said my friend. His wife was silent for a moment. Then she said: "No, I am not—I am only interested in the persons whom democracy brings to the front." That is a very sane and wholesome criticism. The thing which makes many people fight shy of democracy is that it seems to be the glorification of the average man, and not of the ideal man. The average man is not interesting. There was a curious series of portraits some time ago in the *Strand Magazine*, I think, obtained by photographing hundreds of people on the same plate, so that one obtained a sort of average human being. The interest of the pictures to me was the extremely undistinguished and even muzzy result. Not only had the average man as thus depicted not a single attractive feature, he was mean, vacuous, suspicious, and dull. The last thing that one desires for humanity is to co-

ordinate them on uninteresting lines, and to reduce all to a prosaic type.

The views of the average man form what is commonly known as public opinion, and public opinion is a very curious thing to study. The people who form it cannot express it; they are imperturbably silent. They do not even know what they think. They know what they think, when it is put to them; but they are not persuaded or convinced. If a view consonant with public opinion is expressed to them, they say: "Yes, I think that!" If a view at variance with public opinion is expressed to them, they say: "That is stuff and nonsense!" The same view that they have condemned will perhaps be expressed to them a few years later, and they will have found out that they do think so, and will say: "Yes, that is sensible." But where it all comes from, and how the process of leavening takes place, is undiscoverable. It is simply there. Public opinion is deeply sensitive to anything that is picturesque and pathetic. A single striking incident has more weight with it than a row of excellent reasons. The curious thing is that it is not very sensible; it is melodramatic and it is sentimental. Sometimes it is attracted by a personality, by look or gesture or eloquence, and it swallows a set of opinions whole. "So-and-so says that, and it must be right." The truth is that it is really a kind of childlike instinct for what is likeable and pleasant, not a

reasoned thing at all; and perhaps the best service that a man can do to his generation is to present reasonable ideas and principles in a striking or attractive light, and thus contribute to the enlargement and enlightenment of public opinion.

But the worst thing that anyone can do is to yield to pessimistic panic. Things do not really change very fast; even a tremendous upheaval like the French Revolution did not affect the ordinary life of France very deeply. One class was affected most prejudicially by it; but there was no great levelling of property, no very marked increase of social equality. What the duty of the ordinary citizen is, is to make just concessions amiably, and to mind his own business. It is not as though a majority of any country are ever in favour of general insecurity and pillage. "No gentleman," says even the atrocious Mr. Hyde, in Stevenson's great allegory, "but wishes to avoid a row." What most sensible people desire is labour, order, and peace. Most reasonable people like work, and feel dull without it; and nearly all desire an orderly and peaceful home; and democracy is just as much interested in securing all that as the most enlightened of despots. What a democracy is perfectly right in demanding is the amelioration of conditions which reduce labour to helpless drudgery, and make the orderly and peaceful home impossible. But this cannot be secured by

universal pillage. The luxuries which democracy has a perfect right to say shall not be indulged in are the luxuries of idleness and disorder and contempt and oppression. Public opinion has made itself felt on these points already, and it is likely to make itself still more felt. The hope of the nation lies in a sincere attempt to ameliorate evil conditions of existence, in bringing wholesome and ennobling pleasures within the reach of all, and in aiming at simplicity of life and cordial relations; it cannot be done in a moment; but neither can it be done by grudging and resentful acquiescence in movements which one is powerless to check. We must agree swiftly, as the Gospel says, and it is better to meet the reasonable demand than to have the uttermost farthing extorted.



## ABSENT-MINDEDNESS

ABSENT-MINDEDNESS is not in itself a charm, but I have seldom known an absent-minded person who was not charming. It generally goes with guilelessness, sweet temper, and dreaminess. One of the reasons, indeed, why absent-mindedness, which has its inconveniences both for its owner and others, survives in a temperament, is because the person in question is generally incapable of being vexed or put out by small forgetfulnesses and absurdities; if he is so vexed, he generally learns, very speedily, presence of mind, or whatever is the precise opposite of absent-mindedness. But besides a certain childlikeness of nature, absent-mindedness generally implies distinct mental ability, and the power of being absorbed in a train of thought. Indeed absent-mindedness combined with irritability and stupidity would result in about as unpleasing a mixture of qualities as it would be possible to conceive of!

One of the most absent-minded people I ever knew was a more or less distinguished ecclesiastic at whose house I used to visit as a child. He had won some fame in his youth as a poet, and he

was, when I remember him, a preacher of some force; but he could not be depended upon in that capacity. Whatever he was interested in at the moment he preached about, and he had the power of being interested in very dreary things. His sermons were like reveries; indeed, his whole rendering of the service was that of a man who was reading a book to himself and often finding it unexpectedly beautiful and interesting. The result was sometimes extremely startling, because one felt as if one had never heard the familiar words before. I remember his reading the account of the Nativity in a wonderfully feeling manner, "because there was no room for them at the inn." I do not know how the effect was communicated; it was delivered with a half-mournful, half-incredulous smile. If those who refused them admittance had only known what they were doing!

He had a great head of hair, my old friend, which looked as if it were never brushed; great hollow melancholy eyes, and a deliberate, mournful voice which seemed to come from very far away. He was always dressed with great shabbiness, and had yet a remote and stately air. He used to be an object partly of terror and partly of sympathy to us children. He never seemed to recognise us, and had a way of gently detaining us with a hand if he met us, and saying, "I know who you are, child, but I can't find the name!"—and if there is one thing of which a

child is incapable, it is of enunciating its Christian name and surname in public. I don't think he was an effective clergyman, because he seldom knew his parishioners by sight; but he was regarded with a mixture of respect and compassion. A friend of his told me that she was once sitting with his wife—he had fallen in love in his time and had somehow or other found words to communicate the fact—when he came in with one of his sleeves turned up, and the air of a man who had made a great discovery. He had caught sight of the lining of his coat, and it had occurred to him that it formed a little coat of itself, inside the other. His idea was that, if it were taken out, it would make a pretty little summer jacket for him, and he made the suggestion with an air of deep practical sagacity. He was adored in his own family for his sweetness and helplessness, and he was tenderly guarded and interpreted to the world.

There is a charming story by a German novelist—Freytag, I think—which depicts a professor of the same unworldly, contemplative kind. He goes to spend the day at a friend's house, and unfortunately hears the cry of some fowls which are being killed for the dinner, with the result that he loses his appetite and cannot touch any food. The careful, homely hostess, when he goes away, insists on giving him a cold chicken wrapped up in paper, that when he gets home he may not be starved. The faithful house-dog sees the professor pocket this in the hall, and gets into his

sagacious head the idea that the professor is a thief; so he slips out with him and tugs at his pocket as he goes along. Every time that the dog tugs, the professor takes off his hat, and as the dog continues tugging, the professor says, "Thank you, dear, I did bow!" The fact is that the professor's sister has arranged that when she is out walking with him, and they pass someone whom the professor ought to salute, but whom he will certainly not recognise, she should give him a signal to remove his hat by pulling at his coat.

The most notable instance of absent-mindedness, or rather abstraction, I ever saw, was when I was a young man; I was in London, and as I walked up Whitehall, Mr. Gladstone, who was then Premier, came out of Downing Street, and turned up to Trafalgar Square. I walked for some way just behind him. He was entirely absorbed in some train of thought. He was rather shabbily dressed, in an old frock-coat and ill-brushed hat; and I remember noticing that his trousers were so much trodden down at the heel that the threads of the fabric swept the ground. One of his hands was clenched at his side, and as he walked he kept opening the fingers suddenly and closing them again. It was at a time when there was a great deal of political animus—I expect over Home Rule—and I was amused and interested to see the sort of greetings he got. Some people stood still as he passed, bareheaded,

hat in hand. Two fashionably-dressed women in a victoria turned round to observe him, and one of them shook her fist at him. But the great man walked along, entirely oblivious of everything, just removing his hat occasionally when he was very markedly and insisiently saluted. I am sure I never saw any man show such entire unconsciousness of his surroundings, and it was an extremely impressive sight.

I suppose that of all the interesting figures of the last century the most abstracted by far was the poet Coleridge in his later days. He held a sort of little court at Highgate, where he lived in a doctor's house, and discoursed of lofty subjects in a continuous and misty monologue to an admiring throng. There is a delicious description of the ceremony in Carlyle's *Life of Sterling*, one of the most picturesque and humorous passages which Carlyle ever put on paper. Carlyle regarded the oracle with extreme interest and very decided contempt. He said that he listened to the poet discoursing for two stricken hours without conveying to any of his hearers the slightest idea of what he was talking about. Charles Lamb invented one of his most humorous stories to illustrate the same thing. He said that he met Coleridge on Hampstead Heath, and that Coleridge took him aside into a dingle, laid hold of the button of his coat, and began to expound some abstruse subject with extraordinary earnestness. Lamb remembered that he had an appoint-

ment elsewhere, but saw no way of escaping, until at last in desperation he got out a knife, severed the button from his coat, leaving it in Coleridge's fingers, and slipped away. Some hours later he returned and heard Coleridge's voice rolling and echoing in a full tide of eloquence among the gorse-bushes. Lamb said that he went quietly back to his place, and that Coleridge continued the exposition, never having noticed his absence, and still clasping the severed button.

It was an inherited characteristic with Coleridge. His father, I believe, or possibly his grandfather, who was a clergyman, had been known to walk into the vestry in the course of the service, and then, oblivious of the fact that there was more to come, he would divest himself of his robes and go back to the vicarage, leaving the congregation waiting.

A friend of mine once told me that when he was a boy an absent-minded friend, who was a very fine reader, came to stay for a Sunday with his father, who was a country squire. His father was accustomed to read the lessons in church, but being kept away that morning by a cold, he asked the friend to read them instead of him. He gladly consented. What was the consternation of the congregation when the stranger left the family pew at the end of the *Venite*, and walked briskly to the lectern. The clergyman was, however, equal to the situation. He leant forwards and said in a very deferential manner to the

eager aspirant, "We had thought of having the Psalms first," as if they were for once departing from the ordinary ritual. The friend was not in the least discomposed, said with a polite bow, "By all means," and returned to his place with perfect equanimity. It is just that tranquillity of nerve which makes abstraction possible, and also removes any of the usual misery of having made a ridiculous mistake.

In spite, however, of the fact that absent-mindedness is rather a charming quality, or at all events an accompaniment of charming qualities, it is not a thing to practise or to indulge, and absent-minded people ought as far as possible in early life to endeavour to bring themselves into line with the world. One does not as a rule commit important business, which needs to be punctually performed, to a man liable to fits of abstraction; and the absent-minded are only too apt to slip dreamily and good-naturedly through life, engaged in very harmless and amiable trains of thought, but effecting nothing and doing very little to keep the world on the right lines. Indeed, the chief use of the absent-minded man is to give to his own circle the anxious and tender care of one who is not adapted to the rigidity of circumstance and routine, and to evoke a sort of amused love, which is beautiful because it centres on a character which is so childlike and pure, and which never discovers that all are not as guileless and disinterested as himself.

## PEACE

I SAT listening the other day to a beautiful sermon on the Peace of God, on the text, "My peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you." It was a beautiful sermon, as I say, the sentences clear and strong, the thoughts delicate and refined, and the whole of it transfused with a fine emotion. The Christian, said the preacher, was to seek peace and make peace by every means in his power, but he was never to sacrifice principle, or to abandon what he held to be true. He instanced the case of the Congo atrocities, and he said that this afforded a good illustration of the point. The Christian must protest against tyranny and wrong-doing, even if his protest were to endanger the peace of Europe. And then he went on to speak of the doctrines of the faith, and he said that a man must never conceal or dissemble his belief in those doctrines in order to conciliate an opponent, even though he knew that the result must be strife and hostility.

And then the preacher went on to speak of the other side of the question, the peace which



must keep the hearts and minds of believers, the peace that comes from the sense of work faithfully done, and under the blessing of which a man might wait patiently for whatever God chose to send him. By this time I was wishing, as I often do, to ask the preacher some questions, that he might, if he could, resolve the difficulties of his theme; because it seemed to me that he was straining the sense of the word peace somewhat. That is always the difficulty of using these large vague, indistinct words, which have a hundred shades of meaning. In the first place, I felt I could have no clear idea of what peace was, if the aiming at it might result in hostility. Let me take this point first, and try to disentangle what I mean. Peace, in its ordinary sense, involves, I think, some suspension or cessation of strife and hostility. It is a calm security which falls upon the minds of those who have been involved in some wrangling dispute, some heated animosity. The essence of it seems to be that man can, while it lasts, feel a sense of safety and leisure and goodwill, when he can give himself wholly to work or thought which involves no interference with the rights and joys of others, and further, it is a state in which he fears no invasion of his rights, no violence or menaces, but is sure that his neighbours regard him with the same kindness and benevolence with which he regards them. And thus it seems to me essentially a state of things where men have not only

agreed to drop differences, but to unite in sympathy and goodwill.

Now it does not seem to me that it can be described as peace when two adversaries agree, as it is called, to differ. It is not peace when a man says, "So-and-so is an unreasonable and wrong-headed person. He is wholly wedded to his own erroneous ideas, and is unable to see another's point of view. But it is not worth while squabbling and coming to blows over the question. He will find out his mistake in time." That does not seem to me a peaceful attitude at all! The attitude of peace appears to me to be when a man says: "Whatever happens, there must be no animosity between me and So-and-so. It is true that he sees things in a different light; but in a matter of opinion, which cannot be scientifically demonstrated, he has as much right to his belief as I have. My own view may be wrong, but it is the best I can arrive at, and my observations lead me to think it is true, and I must work on in the light of my thought, just as he must. After all, we agree about the main principles, and can live in amity and love." If one sees two good people, kindly, active, unselfish, virtuous, disagreeing fiercely on some point of detail, it is generally safe to assume that the detail is in reality unimportant, or that they need not either of them be in the right; for the melancholy thing is that a difference of opinion about details divides people far more than an agreement about prin-

ciples unites them. I remember once how sharply a congregation were divided about the erection of a crucifix in a church. One section held that it was a beautiful and natural emblem of redemption; another section held, with even greater vehemence, that it was a symbol which suggested and encouraged idolatry. Both parties had, no doubt, some right on their side; and it seemed to me a case where the section who approved should have given way to the section who objected, because, in any case, worship was possible without the crucifix. But the defenders of the symbol chose rather to consider the objection as an almost blasphemous wrong done to the honour of our Lord, and so the unhappy strife continued.

There seems to me no meaning at all in the beatitude about peacemakers, unless a Christian is ready to make some sacrifice and compromise, or at all events to give up pressing some aspect of doctrine as undeniably true. A man may well, in his own mind and heart, believe that a certain doctrine is true, without wishing to enforce the concurrence in it upon those who quite sincerely do not believe it to be true. Take, for instance, such a doctrine as that of infant baptism; a man may trust the tradition of his Church, and say that it is not possible to tell with exactness when the conception of moral truth dawns upon a childish mind, and that it is a great strength for a child to realise, as soon as it realises anything, that it is a baptised member of Christ's Church.

But, on the other hand, a man may maintain that there is a danger in regarding the ceremony as a kind of superstitious charm, securing salvation in a mechanical way, and that it should not be administered until a child has a full consciousness of what is happening. That view is based upon a conscientious reason, and ought to be respected, if sincerely held. There is much in the Gospel about love and helpfulness and conciliation, and not much about inflexible adherence to doctrine or despotic intolerance.

One thinks of the old story about the two hermits in Egypt who began to be afraid that they were living too peaceful and harmonious a life together. One of them said: "Let us have a quarrel, like people in the world, so that we can learn how to defend our faith courageously. I will take one of these stones, and set it up and say it is mine; and you shall say it is yours, and then we will have a fine dispute over it."

"Excellent!" said the other. "That will be good for us both. We are growing lazy and indifferent."

So the first put up a stone and said, "That stone is mine!" And the other said, "I am sure you are very welcome to it." And then after a pause the first said, "Well, I give it to you, and it is yours." And the second said, "I thank you with all my heart." Then the first said, "But, though it is yours, I take it from you and use it as my own." And the second said, "It is the

greatest pleasure I can have to yield it to you." Then they both laughed, and gave up trying to quarrel any more.

And now I must go on to the second point, and try to inquire what the peace of God, which may come to bless the heart of a man, can be. It obviously cannot be a self-righteous kind of complacency, a self-satisfaction which is so deep that nothing can ruffle it. There is a story of an old eighteenth-century bishop who held many rich preferments; and when he lay dying, he was seen to be smiling to himself; his chaplain asked him what gave him such tranquillity, and he said, "The consciousness of a well-spent life!" But this cannot be the peace of God which a Christian ought to have. It cannot be a sense of having found the world a comfortable place and godliness a profitable thing. It must be something deeper and purer than that, a tranquillity far removed from any sense of merit, which can be disturbed by no misunderstanding and troubled by no suffering or loss. It must be a humble and penitent frame of mind, grateful for mercies, and with a calm assurance that trials and troubles do not come fortuitously, but from a Father's loving hand. Such a peace is not desirous of proclaiming its own convictions, nor anxious to defend its own consistency; and still less bent either upon judging the teachings of others or enforcing its own happy conclusions upon them. It concerns itself not at all with controversies or

disputes, but only with concord and sympathy. Whatever happens, it cannot be right for a Christian to adopt a provocative attitude about his own beliefs and hopes; he must hold to them, but he must not try to enforce them. The only thing he has warrant in the Gospel for withstanding is the tyrannical and Pharisaical temper! If the Christian is to turn his cheek to the smiter, it cannot be intended that he is presently, in the cause of principle, to try his hand at a buffet, and hope that his adversary will permit him to make it two. There is really a great deal more in the Gospel about literal non-resistance than we find it convenient to admit. Can it be that by our falling back upon more practical methods the coming of the kingdom is so long delayed?

## CONVERSATION

I WAS bicycling recently alone in the depths of the country, and took refuge from a tremendous thunder-plump of rain in a mean little public-house, with a stone floor, and drearily-painted, much-worn pews of wood. There were two old rustic men sheltering at the same time, who held a long conversation, if it can be called a conversation, where each of the two followed his own line of thought, and where the remarks of the one seemed to suggest nothing to the other, and not even to constitute an interruption to the train of settled reflection.

It was about the weather, this duet, and I cannot reproduce it. One of the two was of opinion that the water of a thunder-shower was not as wholesome as the water of ordinary rain. "There seems something got into it which ain't quite wholesome," he said. The statement came to an end after a minute or two; then there was a silence, and then the first speaker began again with the same remark with which he had begun the first strophe. To my surprise and amusement, the second conversation was almost identically the

same as the first. The same opinion was expressed by the second speaker about the unhealthiness of thunder-rain, and it was, as before, mutely disregarded by the other.

When it was over, I thought that I might myself intervene, so I said: "Some people say that a thunder-storm breaks up the weather." They both turned to me pleasantly, and the first speaker, after a short pause of reflection, said, "Yes, they do say it. It's the weather they go by." I wrestled in vain with the bearing of the remark; and presently the second speaker said, with the air of introducing a new element into the talk, that there seemed to be something got into the rain of a thunder-shower which was not quite wholesome. After this, the sun came out, the last drops of the storm fell with a resounding flick, and we parted with cordial farewells and with much mutual esteem. As I went away, I heard the second speaker say to the first, in a tone of deep conviction, "Yes, it's the weather they go by."

A day or two later I was sitting in my club in London; the big saloon, with its arm-chairs and sofas, its paper-bestrewn tables, its stands of books and magazines, was filling up at tea-time. An old gentleman with a grey beard was sitting near me, when there drifted into his proximity another old gentleman with a wig and an eye-glass. They greeted cordially and arranged to have tea together. The grey-bearded old man was



turning over a paper, which he now laid down, and presently said to the other, "Well, so we have lost our greatest humourist!" The other said, "Our greatest *what?*" The first replied, "Our greatest humourist—that is to say, our greatest humorous writer." "Ah," said the other, in the tone of a man who had rapidly grasped an obscure thought, "I dare say you are referring to Gilbert?" "Yes," said the first, "our greatest humourist, Gilbert." "Yes," said the man with the wig, "you are about right there; he was a very humorous writer, and we've lost him, indeed." "Now I don't suppose," said the grey-beard, "that there was ever such a fortunate conjunction of amusing poetry and straightforward music as his comic operas!" "Why," said the man with the wig, "you refer to Sullivan, I dare say?" "That's right!" said the grey-beard, "Gilbert and Sullivan, there was a straightforward conjunction."

The conversation proceeded for a long time on these simple lines; when the man with the wig rose and said that he must be going, and that it had been a great pleasure to have a good talk.

There was something very refreshing to find the same process going on all the world over. The joys of conversation! I found myself reflecting what a curious thing ordinary talk is. There is no communication of ideas, no interchange of sentiments, no comparison of experiences. Each of the performers in each dialogue had got some

thought of a dim kind in his mind, which he slowly translated into the medium of speech. There was no attempt to correct impressions. The only difference between the uncultured and the cultured conversation was this. The two rustics had not the time or the energy even to listen to each other's contribution. In the club-conversation, the man with the wig had the pleasure of mental discovery, of gauging exactly the thought in the grey-bearded man's mind.

But it was a social refreshment in both cases; and I perceived by degrees that conversation is only very rarely an exchange of thought at all. It is just the establishing of a personal relation. We are most of us like men who are stumbling in a mist, with a painful sense of isolation. Suddenly we encounter another human being similarly occupied. We draw near, we clasp hands, we exchange signals of consciousness, we are glad to find another creature of the same breed as ourselves in our neighbourhood; and then we part and stumble into the mist again. Society is after all but an organisation to remind ourselves that we are not alone, that our bewilderment and our sense of isolation are shared by other like-minded beings!

Of course, it is happier still if we have any ideas as to what it is all about, and can exchange them. But the essential point is still the personal relation. It is that which matters, even more than the ideas. One may love people very much,

and yet never interchange any ideas with them, because the two minds may be on wholly different planes. I watched a mother the other day with a little boy, about whose health she was in great anxiety, sitting on her knee. There was a closer bond between them than there is between two intellectual men-friends! They were utterly happy in each other's nearness, with perfect trustfulness on the one hand, and intense affection on the other. Yet the little boy had no idea what the mother was thinking about, and the mother could not even dimly guess at what the little brain was imagining or recollecting. Yet how much deeper and more sacred a thing was that union of love than the elaborately-made friendship of two critical persons, lucidly aware of each other's mental foibles and failings!

All this may be very obvious, no doubt, but it is a thing which we constantly forget. How swiftly we can form a friendship with a congenial nature, by glance and touch and silent proximity; how far away one often is from one whose mental processes one can follow and admire! It is not in the intellectual region that our relations with others are formed; it is in that narrow enclosure where the soul walks alone, peering out through the bars to see what it is that passes by. That is a thing which one only learns as life goes on. When one was young, one used to think that making friends was a mental process. One had to talk out things, to get at a friend's opinions,

to know what he *thought*. As one gets older, one cares less about opinions and thoughts, one desires more and more to know what a friend *feels*, and one grows to value unintelligent affection above intelligent sympathy. Even if a person's opinions conflict with one's own at every point, yet if he is at ease with one, if he cares to be with one, that is what matters. I used to wonder in the old days, at the extraordinary alliances which I saw: A husband of vivid intellectual sympathies and a dull, homely wife; or a brilliant, artistic, sensitive woman, with a robust and comfortable mate. And yet such misfits often seemed the most contented combinations. One did not see that mutual love is often best sustained by an admiration for opposite qualities—that the brilliant husband could see the superficiality of his own flourishes, and repose gratefully upon his wife's sense and practical judgment, while the wife could unenvyingly admire a vividness which she could not understand. One forgot the necessary alternations of stimulus and restfulness, one overlooked the meaning of the whole affair. What matters most of all in life is mutual confidence, the sense of unity, not of idea and not even of aim, but of regard and hope. What makes many people miss happiness in life—and this is particularly true of intellectual people—is that they look too much for partnership in superficial things, and make the mistake of thinking that life means occupation

and talk. Life is a much deeper and stronger thing than that; occupation is often nothing more than the channel in which it flows, while talk is but the breaking of bubbles on the surface of the stream.

I do not mean that I undervalue conversation; to find anyone who will frankly set his mind alongside of one's own, say without affectation what he thinks, hear without impatience what one believes, is one of the greatest pleasures in the world. But, on the other hand, one learns not to despise the dull and sticky conversations which one has in many cases to endure, when words seem nothing but courteous patches stuck over gaps of silence, because one finds that, even so, something remains; a sense of having been signalled to by another pilgrim on the lonely waste, a sense of proximity triumphantly carried off from an hour of boredom. A great many people think very vaguely and dumbly, and are quite unable to translate even those vague currents of emotion into intelligible words. But the point is to let those emotional currents mingle if possible, to get the sense of fellowship and union. Some of my best friends are people whose conversation at first meeting bored me; while there are people, whose talk always amuses and charms me, with whom I have never been able to establish any relation at all. One must not think lightly of reason, or complain of its hardness and dryness; but it is more important by far to keep one's

emotions vivid and strong, to grasp every hand held out, to answer every call, and to see in every human being one meets, not a probable antagonist, but a possible friend.

## WORK AND PLAY

THERE is an old proverb which says, "If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing well." That is fairly obvious; but the usual connection in which it is quoted is that if a thing is worth doing, it is not worth doing badly; and that I humbly and heartily deny. Used in that sense it becomes a brutal and stupid cudgel in the hands of grim and tiresome elderly people, who are always looking about for an opportunity to interfere and scold; and because they dare not do it to grown-up persons, they use their cudgel on the backs of young people, who cannot or probably will not answer back. There was long ago a dreary friend of my family, a dry, creaking sort of man, who looked as if he were made out of wood, who liked nothing better, I used to think, than spoiling our fun. He was what the old books called a "killjoy." I remember once that he found me playing the piano all by myself, and doing it very badly. He listened a little, and then said that he did not think it was worth playing the piano unless one could do it better than that. I might have replied that the only

way to do it better was to go on doing it until one improved; but I merely closed the piano and fled from him. I do not know that he meant it unkindly; I should think he had a vague idea of exhorting me to moral effort. Indeed, I had myself a lesson the other day, *ex ore infantium*, that one had better not indulge in criticisms. A little girl showed me some poems she had written; I praised them duly, and then pointed out a line which was not grammatical, and which could be altered by the substitution of a single word. She took it from my hand and looked at it; then she said in a nonchalant way, "I don't think I shall alter it." Her mother, who was present, said, "Oh, but if you are shown that anything is wrong, it is much better to change it." "No," said the young poetess, "after all, it is my poem!"

Of course, one must not get into the way of doing everything in a slapdash amateur fashion. One ought to have two or three things—one's work in the world, for instance, which one does well. But when it comes to filling one's leisure, there is no reason why one should not amuse oneself by doing a thing badly, if one cannot do it better. It is a great thing to have a hobby, and a variety of hobbies.

I myself strum infamously on a piano, and draw in pen and ink with more zeal than accomplishment. I have no illusions as to the merit of these performances, and at the age of fifty there is not the slightest hope of improvement;



but I cannot see for the life of me why I should not continue to play and draw while it amuses me. One cannot always be writing and reading, and it is important that one should learn to waste a little time pleasantly to oneself, even if one's amusements give no pleasure to others. It is very important, as one gets older, not to lose the habit of playing; one cannot romp about and climb trees and play games which involve jumping; but one can always amuse oneself, and it need not be in a rational manner. To want to play shows a wholesome appetite and zest for life; and if possible one should encourage oneself in early life to *make* things. There is an elderly lady of my acquaintance who takes an immense and unflagging interest in life. She has a room which she calls her Bindery, in which she is always binding volumes. They are dreadfully badly done as a rule. One can't open one of her masterpieces without breaking the back; and when one has done so, several quires of paper fall out. The lettering is all wrong, and there is seldom quite room on the back for the title. She is wholly aware of the absurd results which she produces, and is more amused by them than anyone else; but she gets a great deal of delight out of the pursuit, and says that the occupation is the real background of her life.

To desire to make something is a perfectly natural human instinct, and I have always held that all children ought to be taught a handicraft.

It would be well if this could be continued at school, but it is not very easy to organise, especially when we make it a rule—not a wholly wise rule—that all boys should play games, whether they can do it or not. I do not think that all games can be omitted even for boys who have no aptitude for them; one must provide exercise and open air for all; but when it comes to a game like cricket, which is essentially an idle game for all but boys who can bowl and bat, and wastes time more than any other game, it does seem to me rather absurd that a boy who has, say, a taste for carpentering should not be allowed to indulge his taste, and give up cricket when it becomes clear that he cannot under any circumstances become proficient at it.

We are a curiously conventional nation in many respects. It is taken for granted by many people that games are not a waste of time, however ill you play them, and that reading is not a waste of time however badly and unintelligently you may read. I was in the company the other day of an elderly gentleman, when a discussion was going on as to the advisability of opening a museum on Sundays. My old friend said pleasantly that he did not think it should be opened. "To speak frankly," he added, "I do not think it is good for people to look at things; it is a waste of time; they get on very well without it, and it only unsettles their minds." "But that is an argument," I said, "not against open-

ing this museum on Sundays, but in favour of the immediate abolition of all museums." "No," he said, "I think that professed students ought to go to museums, but no one else—it is mere dilettante rubbish." At which point I meekly desisted from argument, because it is no good arguing with people who have private decalogues of their own.

My own theory of life is so wholly different, that I find it hard to say how much I disagree. I believe that everyone ought to have work to do, and ought to enjoy work; but I think that many of us do too much work, and have not nearly enough leisure. The difficulty of changing all that is because we have developed a false habit of occupation. We take it for granted that if a person is occupied in something definite, he is well employed. I am a busy man myself, and have many engagements. I reflect with pain sometimes what an extraordinary amount of good time is ill consumed in things like committees, in which details of a wholly unimportant kind are discussed at enormous length, just because they are the only part of the business that most of those present understand. But the result is that for many of us life slips away without living. We know little of the wonderful world around us; the wholesome sights of nature the endless ingenuities and activities of men, frankly, do not interest us. At Cambridge, for instance, I have sometimes been almost appalled

by the way in which undergraduates talk of the absolute impossibility of taking a walk. They walk, talk, eat, play a game, and the day is full; but a walk means nothing to see and nothing to do.

And so I come back to my original proposition, which amounts to this: that we ought to organise leisure more liberally and more sensibly. We have a dreary belief that it is everyone's duty to get on, to make money, to win consideration, to be respected. I am not sure that these ambitions are not absolutely wrong; a man ought to have work and to enjoy it, and after that he ought to desire to be innocently happy, and to be loved; consideration and respect generally mean that a man is thought to know how to secure and how to retain a larger share of the conveniences of life than other people, and to be in no hurry to part with them.

And thus the old proverb seems to me to be one of those dull and selfish maxims which represent the worst side of the English character—its want of originality and lightness and joy and kindly intercourse. It is a commercial maxim through and through. A proverb is generally said to be the wisdom of many and the wit of one; but in this case it seems to me to be little more than the stupidity of many and the cynicism of one.

## LIVELINESS

I WAS talking to a friend the other day, and said in the course of the talk that on the whole the most useful people I knew were the people who had chosen the work which amused them most. My friend took exception to this, and said that it was rather a light-minded and jaunty view of life, and that it left out of sight great purposes and serious effort and devoted self-sacrifice. But I stuck to my point. I had not said that these lives were the finest and the most heroic, but that they were on the whole the most useful. I added that I believed that he agreed with me in reality, but that he probably attached a different sense to the word amusement. The people I meant were those who did their work with a kind of radiant enjoyment and gaiety, because they liked the idea of it and the detail of it; and that the men who worked in that spirit produced a very infectious result on the people who worked with and under them; imported a sort of zest and gusto into the whole business, which carried everything before it, overcame difficulties, made light of disagreeable incidents, and faced

anxieties with a kind of cheerful courage which deprived cares of half their terror. I said that such people reminded me of that pleasant text (which, by the way, I have never induced any of my clerical friends to preach upon, though I have often suggested it), "And David danced before the Lord with all his might." It is true that Michal despised David for dancing so eagerly; but Michal was no doubt one of those intensely conventional people who value propriety above everything; and David was certainly right.

Such a temper as this seems to me to be not in the least inconsistent with effort and seriousness and unselfishness; and what I like about it most is that it does not cloud life, as undue seriousness is apt to do, with a sort of heavy solemnity. I value solemnity in its place; but it ought to come rarely and impressively, on great occasions and at important moments. It is of no use to pretend that life is not a serious business; if one goes to work grinning and giggling, one is apt to get a little nip from circumstances which remind one that levity is not always appropriate. But I think that, for all that, life ought to be lived in a gay temper, as far as possible. Life is full of interesting, exciting, and amusing things, and one is meant to enjoy them heartily. People, their ways, their sayings, and their opinions, are highly entertaining. It is pleasant to know beforehand exactly what line a man is sure to take, what familiar and un-

necessary caution he is going to display, what threadbare phrases and arguments he is going to employ; it is as satisfactory as the striking of a clock at the appointed hour; and not less entertaining are the wholly unexpected things which people do and say, entirely at variance with all their principles and opinions. To apprehend all this and to enjoy it is the essence of humour; and it is a perpetual refreshment to perceive it and relish it.

But if a man, on the other hand, takes up his work with a pompous sense of rectitude, with a belief that he is bound to be always correcting and improving and uplifting people, what a dreary business it often is! I do not know anything which more takes the wind out of one's sails, which brings such a sense of unnatural constraint with it, as being much with people who are always disapproving. I am not advocating a cynical and flippant treatment of everything, and still less an absence of decent and seemly reticence in talk. Nor do I at all mean that everything should be regarded as a joke; I do not know anything more trying, or, indeed, more depressing, than incessant trifling with everything. But what I value is a light touch, a sort of darting quality, like sun and breeze, a changeful mood, amused and interested and serious by turns, responsive and sympathetic. Of course, everyone cannot give this: it is a great and unusual charm. But everyone can resolve that,

whatever happens, they will not blight and interrupt the movement of others' minds, will not bore others with their own preoccupations, or smear their own worries into the gaps of every talk.

I do not think that one's own work is a thing to dwell upon in the company of others; but the people who do their work in a light and interested way have no temptation to do that. They enjoy their work, and when it is done they are pleasantly weary of it, and want to go on to something else. I used to think that Roddie, the beloved collie of whom I have written, and whose loss I still mourn, was an ideal example of how to take life. One would not have thought that an afternoon walk was such a tremendous affair. But Roddie rushed off with a peal of joyful barks, danced round one, was intensely interested, on coming out of the drive, to see if we would turn to the left or the right. Whichever way one turned, there came another loud peal of barks, as though to say, "Right again! The very turn I would have chosen." Then he settled down to his own amusements, peeping into hedgerows, looking through gates, discovering a hundred exciting scents everywhere; and then the walk over, when one turned into the gate, there came another set of jubilant barks, as though to say, "Why, we have got back *home* after all! You really are the cleverest of guides." And then came a delicious nap, beginning instantly, in his own corner, under the card-table.



Of course, we cannot all hope to have the supreme tact and sympathy of a dog. Clever and useful and important as we are, that is beyond our powers! But we can get nearer to this sort of light-heartedness by practice, even by admiring it and desiring it.

But my serious-minded friend would have none of this; he said, not very profoundly, that we were bound to spend and be spent for others. Of course we are! Who can avoid it? But we need not spend ourselves drearily and self-consciously; and the people who do so because they like doing it, spontaneously, and because they are interested in others, are far more effective—at least in my experience—than the people who do it from a strict sense of duty and with a sigh. I do not mean to say that there is not a very fine and silent kind of self-sacrifice, which people can make and do make. But when I think of the great Christian workers whom I have known—my father, for instance, Bishop Lightfoot, Bishop Westcott—they worked because they enjoyed their work with a tremendous zest, because it seemed to them the most delightful and interesting work in the world, and from the purest and simplest pleasure in doing a job well. And then, again, I think of men like Charles Kingsley and Bishop Wilkinson—men of deep sorrows and sharp anxieties—whose work lay more in personal and pastoral regions. These men did not work because they felt bound to do so, but

because they were intensely and incessantly interested in the problems of other people, and longed to give them some of the joyful peace which they themselves enjoyed. And thus I come back to what I said at first, that the most useful people, the people who make most difference to others, are not the people who do their work on a theory and for sound reasons, but the people who act on a sort of generous instinct, and who find the employment of their force and energy delightful, and, in the best and truest sense, amusing.

Of course, one knows of work reluctantly undertaken and faithfully fulfilled; and that is a splendid thing too. "To be afraid of a thing and yet to do it, is what makes the prettiest kind of man"—as the brisk Alan Breck said to David Balfour. But Alan was all on the side of the spirited life. He liked danger, because it gave him a sense of excitement, and brought his powers of inventiveness into use. And what I am really pleading for is that people should not allow their lives to become dull. It is dulness which takes the edge off things, and discourages the young aspirant. We cannot all keep our animal spirits up, and we do not deceive others by perpetually making bad jokes; but we can be on the look-out for what other people are thinking and feeling; we can applaud if we cannot perform, and smile if we cannot be convulsed with laughter. I have a delightful friend at Cambridge, whose interest in life is wholly unabated,

in spite of his snowy locks. I sat next him in Hall not long ago, at his own College. I mentioned a subject which was going to be discussed that evening at a meeting I was to attend. "Ah!" he said, "that's very interesting. Now I should like to take a line of my own!" He began to indicate one or two arguments. "Ha!" he suddenly cried, "this is really very good, much to the point. I must just jot this down!" He seized a *menu* and got out a pencil, and continued to take notes of his own conversation; and at the end he gave me a little smile. "I am afraid I have talked too much! I often do; but I'll just take this card away with me,"—he slipped it into his pocket as he spoke,—“I dare say it will turn out useful; you see, I am interested in most things!”

## PRIDE

I HEARD a sermon the other day, which was both beautiful and forcible, on the subject of pride. The preacher said that pride was a kind of disloyalty to God, and that pride was the sin of the man who would not ride with the troop, or be one of the rank and file, but would take his own solitary and wilful way; and that it was in a treasured and complacent solitariness that pride consisted. He said it was as though the mill-stream were too dignified to go through the mill, and that we must be prepared to go through the mill, and do the useful, obvious work. I think that was all true, and that a sort of solitariness, a desiring to do things in one's own way, an incapacity of working with other people, is all a part of pride. I remember a man who had been for a time in a Benedictine house as a novice telling me his reasons for not continuing there. He said with a smile, "I soon found out that the only monastery of which I could be a member, was a monastery of which I was also abbot!" That was a frank confession of pride. But I think that there is a great deal more in pride

than that, and that it would not have been at the head of all the deadly sins if it were merely the sin of wilfulness or disobedience or self-confidence. If we look at the other side of the question, it surely cannot be that God demands that all work should be done in a timid, half-hearted, uncertain spirit; that we should collapse in the presence of difficulties and disfavour; that we should let evil and meanness and selfishness go unresisted for fear of taking a line of our own, or of being thought to be superior.

And, again, pride is not the same as complacency. I have known men who were very humble about themselves, very conscious of their failures, and yet very proud both in upholding their own ideal and contemning the ideals of other people. And what increases the difficulty is that pride is almost the only sin which can be coupled with words of praise. We can speak of proper pride and noble pride—we cannot speak of proper envy or noble covetousness. And, of course, the reason why it is so deadly a fault is because it is so subtle, so hard to detect, so easy, not only to overlook in oneself, but even to admire. If a man says of another that he is too proud to do anything mean or underhand, he intends to praise him, and a man might well be proud of a pride which prevented his joining in something petty or deceitful; a kind of pride is at the bottom of the feeling *noblesse oblige*. A man who was too proud to confess poverty, or to

deplore his own failures, would not necessarily be a sinner.

We should all agree that a man who was patently and obviously proud of his birth or of his wealth was on the wrong tack. But a man might be proud of his school or his regiment or his profession or his children, and be only the better for it. It is very difficult to disentangle the truth about such kinds of pride, and to see why one is wrong and the other is right. I suppose that it really depends upon the personal attitude. I mean that if a man is conscious, say, that his regiment is a good one, that the tone is keen, sound, friendly, gallant, and duty-loving, so that he is thankful to be a member of it, and anxious to do all he can to contribute to its welfare, it is a wholesome pride. Whereas if he is proud only that it is a smart, rich, well-bred, dashing regiment, envied by vulgar people, and fashionable, it is the wrong sort of pride, because he looks upon these qualities as somehow increasing his own reputation, and claims as creditable what are only the gifts of fortune. Pride is, in fact, a hard and confident belief in oneself, which leads one to take success as a sort of natural right, and further makes one despise and judge hardly the performances and aims of other people.

And thus it is a quality which stands in the way of progress and peace, because it leads men to be unwilling to compromise, or to be con-

siderate, or to do anything except on their own terms.

But, as I said, the danger of it is that it is so terribly hard to detect in oneself, because it masquerades as an angel of light. A man may learn to give up much for the sake of duty or honour, to make allowances for other people, to use them as far as he can, to admit good-humouredly enough their good points, and yet he may have a serene confidence that after all his way is the best, and that it is only a want of perception and reason and sense that makes others fail to agree with him. I have known frank, friendly, good-natured, effective people, with whom one could never yet feel on an equality. They were patient and kindly and reasonable enough, and yet one felt all the time that there was an inner stubbornness about them, and that for all their kindness they were deliberately judging one for being wrong-headed and weak-minded and ineffective and sentimental. But the difficulty is this: suppose one perceives or believes another man to be mean or vulgar or unjust or unscrupulous, is one bound to try to persuade oneself that he is the opposite, or to assert it? It seems to me as absurd as if one was bound to try to think ugly people beautiful or fat people slim. And may one not be thankful or grateful if one is not ugly or fat? Is it pride to recognise such advantages as one has, or to be glad that one has them? The answer is that one can-

not, if one has perceptions at all, be blind to other people's faults and disadvantages. To pretend it would be to be deliberately hypocritical. The mischief begins when self-comparison begins, and when one thinks of other people's failings merely to accentuate the comfortable sense of one's own virtues; because the natural sequel is that one becomes blind to one's own faults. There is no need whatever to be for ever morbidly dwelling upon and exaggerating one's own faults—that often ends in a kind of complacent humility which is the most dangerous disguise of pride. But one must resolutely perceive and know that one's own way of going to work is not necessarily the best. It may be the best way or the only way for oneself, and one has a perfect right, indeed a duty, to do the best work one can under the best conditions one can secure. But if one sees other influences more potent, other people doing more good in their way, other people receiving good from methods which one does not like or from people whom one does not admire, one must not try to interfere with it or to be jealous of it or to belittle it, but to be sincerely thankful that, by whatever means, the thing is done. Take the case of a writer: supposing that he sees that another writer, whom he may think silly or vulgar or cheap or melodramatic, is better liked, more read, more attended to than himself, he must be glad that it is so; he must not try to cast cold water upon the other's work or to



call it inferior or twaddling. He need not desert his own way of work, but he must be content to recognise that the other is doing his work in the best way that he can, and that his admirers admire him for good and sufficient reasons; if he is a clergyman or a schoolmaster, and sees other clergy and teachers more effective on different lines, he must not sneer and shrug his shoulders, and say that they sacrifice truth to impressiveness and strictness to popularity. He must not be above taking hints from them, but he must be glad that somehow or other the right kind of effect is being produced. Pride comes in if one believes one's own way to be the only way or the best way, because the moment one feels that, one begins to measure all natures by one's own, and to feel not that man is made after the likeness of God, but that God must somehow or other resemble oneself, and be guiding the world on the lines of which one approves.

The reason why pride is so deadly is because it makes one incapable of learning or of perceiving one's failures and shortcomings. One translates a failure of one's own into the stupidity or the perverseness of other people, and instead of taking a misfortune or a calamity as showing one frankly and plainly that one has been stupid or lazy or careless, one takes it with a kind of patient solemnity, as intended to minister to one's own sense of ineffable importance. One thinks of it as the dent of the graver upon the gem, when

it is often no more than the throwing of the cracked potsherd upon the rubbish heap.

Experience is for many of us a process of emptying, of bringing us to our senses, of showing us that there is but little we are permitted to do. We start gay and confident, with a strong sense of our good intentions, our refinement, our perceptiveness, our uncommonness, and we have got to learn, most of us, that it does not count for so much after all; that we cannot hope to have a great effect upon the world, but that we must be thankful to be shown our place, and be grateful for our little bit of work. We are not meant to be hopeless and despondent about ourselves, to grovel abjectly in a sense of feebleness, to welter in ineffectiveness, of course. But we are meant to know that even if we are inside the wicket-gate, we are yet a very long way from the celestial city, and that we are better occupied in minding the road, and facing the goblins, than in drawing imaginary elevations of the King's palace, in arranging who will enter and why, in anticipating our own triumph and the blowing of the heavenly trumpets. It is often when a man least expects it that he finds his feet are on the steps of jacinth, and when he is most aware of his own failure to do what he might have done, most overwhelmed by the murmurs of regret and disappointment, that the music of the melodious notes breaks serenely on the misty air.

## ALLEGORIES

THERE is no doubt that the pleasure felt by ordinary people in parables and allegories is a very general one, and has its roots far down in human nature. In its simplest form it is the same pleasure which a child has, say, in a wooden figure of a cow or horse, which is not only a toy, but a box, and can open and have things kept inside it. A parable is just like that: it is a pretty thing in itself, but it has a use besides, and real things can be laid away there. It is a mental pleasure of a simple kind; one has the story first and then one has the pleasure of fitting it to real events and facts, and of perceiving how it corresponds. It is the same thing that makes a savage tell stories about the sun and moon and stars, the husband and wife and their inconveniently large family; and it may be noted how constantly little children, who draw a picture of a scene, tend to put a human face to the sun, who comes peeping over the edge of the world; and just in the same way the figures of beasts, and the curves and lines of human furniture and human ornaments were very anciently

attached to the constellations. It is the joy of detecting resemblances which underlies it all; one likes to see that a pollarded beech-tree is like a kind of man holding up a bunch of strange horns on his head, with terrifying, unwinking eyes, and a great mouth prepared for shouting. For how many years back have even I, who am old enough to know better, been pleased to perceive that the overlapping of two curtains above a red blind, in a certain house where I often stay, makes, in combination with the curtain-rings, a sort of red-bladed sword with a curious twisted hilt! Another odder thing still is that in the depths of the mind the thing is not only *like* a sword; it *is* a sword, and there's an end of it.

And then after those first pleasures of resemblance, one gets a little further on, and begins to see deeper still; and things become likenesses, not of other things, but of mental ideas. The ivy that grows so fast and stretches out such soft green innocent tendrils across the window-pane becomes like a fault which grows pleasantly upon a man, and yet will darken all his life if it has its way; the daisy with its open, homely little face looking up out of the grass, is the simple innocence that takes things as they come, and is quietly happy in a comfortable manner, whatever is going on.

And then we come to see that most things, indeed, that surround us are, in a very deep and wonderful fashion, types and symbols of what we

are and of what we either may become, if we take good heed, or of what we may fail to become, if we go on our careless way, learning nothing from what happens to us except how to be disappointed and impatient. For the sum and essence of all allegories is a noble kind of patience, that lives under laws of time and space, and yet has a great life of its own, which events can help or hinder, according as we view them and receive them; and we learn, perhaps very late in life, to distinguish between the things that it is good for us to keep—sweet memories and faithful affections and hopes of goodness not yet realised—and the things which we ought to throw away as soon as we can—old grudges and poisonous recollections, and the useless burdens with which, out of a fearful sort of prudence, we weight our uncertain steps.

I do not think there is a more beautiful or a happier gift than the power of seeing past the surface of things into their inner realities. Of course we must not be always drawing morals for the sake of other people, because then we grow tiresome, and like a wind that goes on turning over the pages of one's book in a persistent way, as if eager to get to the end. Mr. Interpreter in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, with all his similitudes and morals, must have been a rather overpowering person to live with, when the pilgrims had gone on their way, with pills and cordials, and the family sate down to luncheon! Perhaps he said

to his wife: "My dear, that room full of spiders was very convenient this morning to draw a moral from, but it really does not reflect much credit upon your housemaid!" And I have often wondered what the private thoughts and occupations were of the two men, one of whom had to cast water on the fire to put it out, and the other who had to cast oil secretly upon the flames. I can imagine their comparing notes and agreeing that their posts were rather unsatisfactory, and not likely to lead to anything!

Then there is another thing that has often struck me about allegories; and that is that they are on the whole so discouraging. The percentage of successful candidates for the heavenly honours is so extremely small! The man goes upon his quest backed by all sorts of wonderful powers, and he makes such foolish mistakes, and finds such a record of failures—the bones in the grass, the careless predecessors turned into pigs or peacocks, the foolish wayfarers being put into a hole at the side of the hill—that the wonder is that any one ever gets through at all! One desires a very different kind of allegory, a race like the Caucus-race in *Alice in Wonderland*, where every one wins and every one has a prize.

But as a wise friend of mine said to me the other day, if one must think of percentages at all, it may be just the other way round. The perverse and greedy have fallen into snares and pits, and they may be the tiny percentage who do *not*

get through. But all the while an endless stream of pilgrims have been marching past, and passing on, and the walls and parapets of the heavenly city are full of smiling persons who look over, and welcome the tired souls who struggle in with gladness and astonishment, under the melodious notes of the silver trumpets, hardly daring to believe that they are actually there.

And I am sure that on the whole one of the things that hurts us most and keeps us back, is that we will continue to think of trials and sorrows and misfortunes as things that are actually there, injuring us and threatening us, when they are as dead as Giant Despair. Evil is, of course, horribly powerful; but it is also strangely unreal. Half the torture of a mistake is the misery of considering what other people will think of it all, as if that made any difference! The mistake was made, and we trust, now that we are wiser, that we shall not make it again. What ought to vex us is that we were weak enough or foolish enough to make it, not that other people will blame us. It was a very cynical man who said that the first commandment of all was "Thou shalt not be found out." We may be thankful indeed that all we have done and thought is not known to others, because their disapproving looks would be a sad and mournful reflection of our own self-displeasure; while, if we come to a better mind, it is a good and wholesome thing to forget our mistakes, and not to encourage them to hang

round us like a cloud of poisonous flies. But it is essential that we should find ourselves out and have no dull pretences. There is a striking little story I once read—I have forgotten where—of a man entertaining his own conscience. The man—that is, his conventional and complacent self—gets a good meal ready, but his conscience comes in tired and woe-begone, cannot taste the food, and puts his head down upon his hands. The man says that it is hardly courteous to come so ill-dressed and be so unsociable. The conscience says: “I cannot help it. I am quite worn out. If you knew what I know, you could not smile and eat.” Then the man says patronisingly: “Oh, I dare say there are plenty of people who have done far worse; it does not do to think too much of these things. Least said is soonest mended.” And then the conscience looks up, and says, “Well, let me remind you of something,” and he tells him a tale of old ingratitude and unkindness which spoils the man’s appetite, and makes him get up from the table in a rage. I forget how the story went on, but they settled that they would try to work better together.

But if there is a danger in being content to plod along, and take things dully as they come, without looking forwards or backwards, there is also a danger in allegorising overmuch, and getting to regard one’s own little pilgrimage as the one central fact of importance in the world. We have to remember that it is a great thing to be



allowed to go on pilgrimage at all, that Mr. Gaius, for all his hospitality, has other people to entertain beside ourselves, and that we cannot order rooms in the House Beautiful or use it as an agreeable residence. There are very strong things all about us, both for and against us, and we are lucky if we slip through unhurt.

The most dreadful fact of all is that it is easy, if we are selfish and romantic together, to imagine that we are like Christian or Faithful, while all the time we may be like Ignorance, sauntering in a bypath, or like the young woman whose name was Dull, or we may even be bearing still more disreputable names. We must be sure that we really are on pilgrimage, not merely being carried in a comfortable train through exciting and interesting places. It is not a pilgrimage which we can take with a Baedeker in our hands, nor can we hope that we can do the journey entirely on the Delectable Mountains. There are dull stretches of road which we do well to beguile with fine memories and hopes; while in the dark valley itself, with the hobgoblins howling in the smoke, the less we can think of them, and the more we can remember our glimpse through the Shepherd's perspective-glass of the city, so much the better for ourselves and for all that walk in our company.

## PUBLICITY AND PRIVACY

I WAS sitting the other day with an old friend, who had called upon me in my rooms at Cambridge, when a telegram was brought in. I read it, apologising, and then said, showing it to him, "I only wonder that it can *pay* to do this to any extent!" It was a wire from a very up-to-date daily paper, requesting to know my opinion on some current topic, and enclosing a double pre-paid reply form.

My friend, I must first say, is an elderly man, scholarly, fastidious, extremely refined, a considerable student, and very retiring by nature, but with a fine natural courtesy which makes him on the too rare occasions when I see him the most charming of companions. If his eye ever falls on these words, which is not likely, he will not take umbrage at this description, which is literally and precisely true.

He read the telegram; while I drew out a stylograph, and asking him to excuse me for a minute, began to write. He stared at me for a moment, across the pink paper. Then he said, in a tone of the deepest amazement, "You are surely not

going to *answer* that?" "Yes," I said, "I am—why not?" "You mean to say," he said, "that you are going to allow your name to appear, with your opinion on this question, in a daily paper, to be read by hundreds of readers? It is simply inconceivable to me! and just because an editor asks you!"

"Yes," I said, "I am certainly going to answer it. It is a question on which I hold perfectly definite views, and I am not at all sorry to have an opportunity of stating them. I don't, I confess, quite see why my opinion is wanted, nor why it should be of the smallest interest to anyone to know what I think about it. But if anyone does wish to know, I am prepared to tell him my opinion, just as I should tell you, if you asked me."

"Well," he said, "I must say that you surprise me—I am very much surprised. I would n't do that for a hundred pounds."

"I wish," I said, "that you would tell me exactly and frankly why you should object? If you have an opinion on a subject, and are not ashamed of your opinion, why should you not state it?"

"I really don't quite know," he said; "I don't think I can give any logical reason; it is more a matter of feeling. I am afraid I should think it—you don't mind my using the word?—terribly vulgar. It seems to me against all my instincts of privacy and propriety to do a thing like this.

I dare say I am very old-fashioned; but it seems to me impertinent that you should be asked, and quite dreadful that you should consent, to gratify a trivial curiosity."

"Well," I said, "I fully realise that your feeling is a much more delicate and refined one than my own; I look at it in a very commonplace light. I should like people to take the same view of this question as I take myself. I don't expect to convert many people to my way of thinking; but if anyone is likely to regard my opinion, and to modify his own in consequence of knowing mine, I am only too happy to make him a present of mine. I do not see that it is worse than writing a signed article on a subject, or a book. In fact, I think it is less open to objection; for when I write an article or a book, I sell my opinions, or at least offer them for sale; while this is wholly gratuitous."

"Yes," he said, "I see that your view is quite consistent and probably sensible. But that any editor should feel at liberty to rush into your room like this with a question, and that you should feel bound in any way to allow your opinions to be made public, seems to me entirely improper and undignified."

"Why," I said, "I only regard it as a legitimate extension of conversation! In a conversation one can make one's opinions audible to about a dozen people; in a newspaper one can make them audible to about a hundred thousand people—and the more the merrier!"

My friend gave a sort of sigh, and said, "Perhaps you are right," in a melancholy tone; but I could see that he was both puzzled and distressed.

When he left me I began to think over the question again, and to search out my spirits, to see if in any corner of my mind I could detect any lurking sense of impropriety in the proceeding. But I can find none.

I have a very strong feeling about one's right to privacy—indeed, I think that one has a perfect right to refuse such requests as these. One may have formed no opinion on a subject, or one may not wish one's opinion to be known. I certainly do not think that anyone has a right to claim to call upon one or to demand to see one. I very much resent the kind of letter I sometimes get, which says: "I have been reading one of your books with interest, and as I am passing through Cambridge to-morrow, I shall venture to call and make your acquaintance." I think that this savours of impertinence, because it may not be convenient or pleasant to me to receive a stranger on such terms. In such a case a man ought to obtain a proper introduction from a mutual friend. But, on the other hand, I should always welcome a friendly letter about a book, or a civil question about a statement made in a book. That is a perfectly legitimate thing to do, though I have a right, if I choose, not to answer it. But to claim one's time and attention and

presence is a very different matter, especially if one's consent is taken for granted.

Of course a writer in whose writings there is a certain autobiographical element is bound to be criticised, as I have often been, for having no proper sense of privacy and intimacy. Critics speak of it as though it were like substituting a plate-glass front to one's house for a brick one, and having one's meals and going to bed in public. I do not contest that opinion; and if a man feels that an *intime* book is indelicate, he has every right to say so. But I think it is very difficult to give a good reason for the objection. I myself value the sense of intimacy and personality in a book above all other qualities. The appeal of all poets, dramatists, and essayists is based entirely upon their intimacy. It seems to me that there is all the difference between telling the world what you choose to tell it, and letting people see and investigate for themselves. The only objection I make to autobiographical books is that they are sometimes dull—pompous, complacent, heavy, self-satisfied. The more that a man like Ruskin deigns to tell me about himself, the better I am pleased; but I am sometimes frankly bored by pious Æneas and his adventures. It all depends upon whether the recital is egotistical, whether the writer takes himself too seriously. If, on the other hand, one feels that a man is intensely interested in his experiences, not only because they are his own, but because they are

just the things that happen to him, the things he knows and cares about, the impression is delightful. I had ten times rather have a man's account of his own vivid actual thoughts and adventures, than his dull and faulty imaginations and fancies. I want to know what life is like to other people, and what they think about it all, not their platitudes and melodramas. It seems to me that one of the blessed results of the multiplication of books and newspapers is that one can talk to a larger audience. I like talking to people, and hearing them talk, if they will only say what they really think, and not put me off with conventional remarks about things in which neither of us takes the smallest interest. Stale gossip, old stories, the weather, the last railway accident, cautious and incomplete views of politics—these are the heavy matters, liturgically recited, which make conversation insupportable. But if a companion has interests, views, prejudices, preferences, and if he will discuss them, not merely state them, and show a decent interest in one's own views, then any talk becomes interesting. I think that writers on current topics should aim at being just as frank and open in their writings as they would be in talk with a trusted friend. And the more that one trusts people, and listens with courtesy and fairness to their views, the better for us all. No one person can form a complete and comprehensive judgment of life and its issues; the only

way to arrive at a solution is to balance and weigh the views of other people; and it is a wholesome and a bracing thing to know that men whom one respects—and even men whom one does not respect—may disagree with one, wholly and entirely, on almost all subjects of importance.

I had a very pleasant adventure the other day. I went to speak to an audience in London, most of whom, I afterwards learned, had read some of my books. I can only say that it was one of the most comfortable and encouraging experiences I have ever had, not because I was satisfied with my lecture, but because, from first to last, I really felt that I was among friends, and surrounded with simple kindness and goodwill. I cannot see that any one was the worse for this. It did not make me believe that I was a prophet or a teacher; it simply enabled me to feel that we all met on grounds of perfectly easy and simple friendliness. My friends were quite prepared to listen to anything I had to say, and I did my best to interest them. I got far more than I gave, for we met in what the old prayer calls the bond of peace, and on grounds of perfectly simple human interest. I believe that our suspicions and mistrusts of one another are really very old and barbarous things, primitive inheritances from the time when every man had to fight for his own hand. But we have come to the threshold of a very different era, a time when we must be prepared to give all we can, and not simply to take all we can get.



The laws of time and space forbid us to live our lives in company with the whole world; but we can try to believe that the affection and kindness we meet with in our own little circles are waiting for us on every side; and the more that we can step outside of our limitations, and clasp hands with unknown friends, the better for us all.

## EXPERIENCE

It often seems to me a difficult point, illustrating the curious fact that the materials of the world are so good but so imperfectly adjusted, that busy and effective people get too little experience out of life, and idle and ineffective people get too much. The effective man perceives so little of the movement of the mind and thought of humanity, because he modifies to such an extent the thoughts and dispositions of those with whom he comes into contact; they become what he expects them to be, and what they feel he expects them to be. I have so often seen a masterful man in contact with submissive people, under the impression that he reads them like a book, when all he sees is his own reflected light, as though the sun were to analyse and despise the light of the moon. A really masterful character, if it be also even superficially affectionate, does seem to me to know so little about humanity as a rule. I know, for instance, an enthusiastic and ardent admirer of the classics, a schoolmaster, who quotes to me triumphantly instances of the pathetic interest which his pupils take in the

classics, to prove that the classics are, after all, the only kind of culture that really appeals to the human heart. He does not know, and I cannot tell him, that all the interest he detects is simply a submissive and gentle hypocrisy, a desire to please and satisfy him, a desperate clinging to anything which his pupils know will win his approval. And I have, too, in my mind a very decisive academical personage, who detects and praises business capacities and clear-headed views in the minds of the most muddled and unbusiness-like of the satellites who agree with him. "Poor So-and-so!" I can hear him say. "Of course he has not much head for business, but he somehow catches the drift of a question, and knows what is the right line to follow."

The effective man is always dealing with things, and turning possibilities into facts, and driving the machine to such an extent that he cannot notice the bits of the road and the sort of landscape through which he is passing; he is so pre-occupied with steering his big concern along streets, slackening or putting on speed, dodging through other vehicles, that he cannot know what the faces are that look out of the upper windows, or interpret the life of the by-road or the alley. He gets to know something of the quality of opposing forces, but nothing of the forces which are neither in opposition nor in sympathy. The result is that he overlooks or underrates all the vague and beautiful influences, which flow on in-

dependently, and which perhaps many years ago gave the very impulse to the movement which he is now engaged in directing.

And then, on the other hand, the ineffective, restless, spectatorial people get, as I have said, too much experience. Their time and energy are not taken up with the alert conduct of some definite scheme or duty. They see too much and know too much of the great torrent of vague impulses, and the stagnant expanses of inertia, the sickly malarious swamps of morbidity. They are too much bewildered by it all, just as the effective are not bewildered enough. The reasons for inaction multiply about them; they see that activity often does little more than stir the surface without bidding the waters flow; they are fastidious about adding one more to the pile of failures; they do not see the use of trying to define their own inexactness.

Sometimes, as life goes on, a reversal of these positions is brought about. The busy man becomes an extinct volcano, of which the burnt-out crater is not even menacing, but only inconvenient and perhaps picturesque. He sits bullying people over the petty and unimportant enterprises in which he is still allowed to take a share. But the ineffective man sometimes blossoms out into a kindly and gracious creature; things have at last become a little plainer, and he knows at least where to bestow his sympathy. He does not expect a prompt settlement of all

conflicting claims, but he knows dimly what he desires, and he is on the side of things orderly and peaceful, neither contemptuous of movement nor impatient of delay.

One sees all this sometimes in the faces of people. I know nothing more melancholy than the sight of dilapidated force, the fierce gesture and the commanding eye with no authority behind; the truculence, which is merely grotesque rudeness, extorting just a momentary and meaningless deference, and then politely disregarded; and yet, on the other hand, the person who has never been of much account, but who has been affectionate, humble-minded, and patient, gets a look of serenity, of contented waiting, which transfigures a battered face from within. One sees it in the faces of old and tired village people, who have done such work as they could ever hope to do, and can take life as they find it, with a smiling dignity, which is very different from the dignity of conscious power, and looks as if somehow self had melted out into a patience which enjoys rather than endures.

Very rarely one sees a union of the two, where a man has been effective and active, and yet has never lost sight of the limits and deficiencies of effectiveness, and into whose face comes a light not so much of a tired sunset, as the promise of a further dawn.

Women have to bear the stress of this lapse of energies even more than men; to an exciting

girlhood succeeds marriage, the fierce joys and preoccupations of motherhood, the sympathetic handling of the varying dispositions of the growing family; then the launching away of the little ships begins; the boys settle down to work in the world, the girls marry; and quite suddenly, sometimes, the wheels stop working, and the mother, whose life has been so full of others' cares, finds herself in a moment with nothing whatever to do but to manage a house, and to devote herself to her husband, whose interests in many cases have been rather thrust into the shade by the life and problems of the children. Or widowhood brings with it a sudden cessation of duties; and a woman finds herself obliged to make a life of her own, when all along her life has been made for her and forced upon her.

It is useless to say that men and women must keep the evening of life in view and plan for it. There is often neither time nor taste to do so. Hobbies, reading, outlying friendships have all been swept away joyfully enough by the rush of the vital tide; and of all things the most difficult is to construct interests out of trivialities, when life has been too full of energies for trivialities to have a place at all, except as interruptions to the real business of the moment.

Of course it would be all easy enough if we had our fill of life, and the evening were but a time of wholesome and comfortable weariness. But this natural and normal development is con-

stantly broken in upon by untoward circumstance. Illness, bereavement, calamity, come, and the flight lapses suddenly in mid-career. Not everyone can begin to collect shells or to study political economy, when life falls in ruins about him.

It ought to be so plain what to do, and it is, as a matter of fact, so difficult and intricate. If one could but make some quiet secret investment of fancy and hope, which would be there, safe and secure, when we are suddenly beggared! The figure of Mrs. Leigh in *Westward Ho!* so serene and gracious, entirely occupied in religious contemplation and parental adoration, is an attractive one at first, but becomes melodramatic and unreal if one looks at it closer.

I suppose that the over-busy people ought to try to clear a little space in their lives, in which they may make sure that the arrows of God strike home; because the eager, rushing, restless life often holds up a shield against reality. It is easy to say that they ought to do this, but when life is crammed with practical things which at all events seem to want doing, it is very hard to set aside from one's active time an hour which one is not quite sure how to occupy, an hour of vague abstraction, which seems merely so much time wasted. The case is easier for the people whose time is not actively occupied and who are over-burdened with fruitless reflection. I received the other day a letter from a clever and unhappy

woman, wealthy, childless, widowed, in indifferent health, who said that she had no obvious duties, and found the enigma of the world press heavily upon her. Such a one ought, I think, at whatever cost of distastefulness or boredom, to take up a piece of tangible and practical work. Unpaid work is not difficult to find, and a task does relieve and steady the mind in a wonderful manner.

One does not want experience, real and vital experience, to be either on the one hand a casual visitor to a mind, like a bird which hops and picks about a lawn, and hardly dints its surface; nor does one, on the other hand, desire it to be a weight put over life and flattening it out, like a stone that lies upon a grass-plot, crushing the grass into a pale and sickly languor, and affording a home for loathly and shadow-loving insects. But it is hard to find sufficient initiative to correct faults of temperament. It is so easy to follow the line of least resistance, and to be busy or dreary, as circumstances dictate.

The happiest lot of all is to have enough definite duties to take off the humours of the mind, and enough energy to use leisure profitably—if one is as Martha, to resolve to sit still and listen to the blessed talk; and if one is as Mary, to be ready to lend a hand to wash the plates. As Ruskin once wrote in one of those large and true summaries of principle which fell so easily from his hand: “Life without industry



is guilt; and industry without art [by which he meant the disinterested love of beautiful and noble things] is brutality." That is the truth, make what excuses we may.

## RESIGNATION

SOME time ago I was sitting with a friend of mine, and the talk drifted on to a friend of his, Anson by name, whom I just knew by sight, and had met perhaps two or three times. Anson was a young man, under thirty, and his wife had just died, after two years of married life, leaving him with a baby boy. The wife, whom I also just knew, was a perfectly delightful creature, warm-hearted, vivid, interested in many things, and of great personal beauty and charm.

I said, I think, that I simply could not understand how a man could endure such a blow at all—how it would be possible to go on living after such a bereavement, missing so beloved a companion at every moment. “It is not,” I said, “as the common phrase goes, losing the half of one’s life, for in a marriage like that it would seem to be the whole of life that is gone; I do not suppose that there was a thought he did not share with her, and hardly a waking moment when she was out of his thoughts.”

“That is so,” said my friend. “It was just one of those absolutely perfect marriages; and

yet he is bearing his loss with astonishing patience and resignation. He is simply wonderful!"

"Ah!" I said, "I do not really like that word in that connection. I don't know poor Anson well enough to say; but when the word 'wonderful' is used, it seems to me to imply a dangerous exaltation of spirit, which is followed by a terrible reaction; or else—well, I hardly like to say it, because it seems cynical, but it is not—but I suspect such people of not caring as much as it would be natural to imagine—of having consolations in fact. I know an elderly lady whose husband died after an illness of some months. They were a very devoted pair, I had always thought. She was a woman who had always subordinated her life to his; and he, though a very affectionate man, was an exacting one too. Well, she bore it 'wonderfully,' and then it turned out that when his illness was pronounced hopeless she had quietly, without saying anything about it, bought a house in Florence; she went off there after his death, and I don't honestly think she suffered very much. I do not mean for an instant that she did not regret him, or that she would not have done anything to have saved him or to have got him back; the process was wholly unconscious; but I really believe that she had suffered all her life without knowing it from a pent-up individuality, and from having no life of her own, and this, I think, came to her assistance; the interest of being able to lay out

her life upon her own lines did distract and sustain her. Of course, she may have suffered, but she gave little sign of it."

"I think that is quite possible," said my friend. "A great loss does brace people to an effort; and there is no doubt that effort is enjoyable. But I will show you a letter which Anson wrote me, in reply to a letter of my own, and then you can judge."

He took a letter from a drawer, and gave it me. It certainly was a beautiful letter in one sense. The writer said that the light of his life had gone out, but that he was going to live "in all things even as if she were by." That he was grateful for the priceless gift of her love and companionship, and looked forward with a certain hope to reunion, and that he knew that she would have been wholly brave herself if she had lost him, and that he was going to live as she would have wished him to live. It was a long letter, and it breathed from end to end the same hopeful and tranquil spirit. I read it twice through, and sat in silence.

"Well," said my friend at last, "what do you think of it?" "I don't know what to think," I said at last, "but I will speak quite frankly; and remember, I don't know Anson, so it is all guess-work. It may, I think, be written in a mood of intense but unconscious excitement. A man may feel to himself 'That is how I ought to think, and that is how I will try to think'—and if this

is so, I should be afraid of a terrible breakdown later. Of course, there is no pretence about it—I don't mean that! But it may be the kind of rapture which comes of pain, and that is a dangerous rapture. I had far rather think it is that. But what I really miss in it is the human *cri du cœur*. The man who wrote this had, so to speak, all his wits about him. He is not, for some reason or other, in an agony. He is sublime and uplifted. I feel that I had rather know that he was utterly crushed by his loss, that he could see no one, do nothing. I don't think that any human love ought to be able to look so far ahead at such a moment. I have seen a man before now in hopeless grief. It was a friend of mine who had lost his only son, a boy of extraordinary promise, who was simply the apple of his eye. Well, he was very courageous, too; he went on with his work, he was tenderly courteous and considerate, but he could not speak of his grief; he hardly ate or slept, and he had a perfectly heart-breaking smile on his face, which gave me the feeling of chords strained to the bursting point, as though a touch would snap them. Now, I don't feel as if this letter came out of a mood like that, and though again and again we find that people do behave in a desperate crisis with more courage than would have been expected, yet I can't quite sympathise with the exalted view. It seems to me to shirk or miss the meaning of grief. I had rather almost that he went mad, or

had an illness, or moped, or did something human and natural. I feel that the way he is behaving is the way in which people behave in plays or in books, when the sorrow is not really there, but only the imagined sorrow. I think that a man may win his way to a heavenly patience and acquiescence, but it is almost ghastly that he should find it at once in fullest measure. How can a man, the whole structure of whose life and love has suddenly crumbled about him, look through it all in that serene way? I don't think that people at such a time ought to act a part, however fine. It seems to me as if they were more conscious of the impressive effect of their part, than of the loss itself. I do not think I should feel thus if a man lost his fortune or his position or even his health. Those are all calamities which ought to be borne philosophically, and where one respects and admires a man for being able to smile and begin again. In Sir Walter Scott's *Diary* there is nothing so wonderful as the way in which he records that the loss of his wealth really did not affect him as much as he had expected, and that it was a relief to him when everyone knew the facts. But when it comes to losing the closest, best, and sweetest of human relationships, all the words and glances and embraces that are so much in themselves, and stand for so much more, all the interchange of thoughts and hopes and fears and wonders—when all this is suddenly swept away into silence and dark-

ness, the misery, the pathos, the waste, the horror of it must be unendurable; and faith itself is a thing that must be won; it cannot be drunk like a healing draught. One does not want people to be able to forget, but to triumph over remembrance."

"Yes," said my friend very gravely, "I think that is all quite true. But Anson is not a self-conscious man at all. He is perfectly frank and simple. He is writing in this letter not platitudes, but experience—I am sure of that. Something—some flash of hope, some certainty, has come in between him and his sorrow; and he is not thinking of himself at all. Is it possible, do you suppose—I do not want to speak fancifully or transcendently—that he may be sustained by her conscious thought? If it were really true that she, out of the body, seeing the truth and the significance of loss could put her spirit in touch with his, and make him feel that love were not over, and that separation were not disunion, would that explain it? I know it is all a mystery, but surely we must all feel that we are visited by thoughts and hopes from time to time that are not of our own making—that are sent to us? I could not, if I would, believe that the world is so sharply cut off from what lies behind the world, from all that has gone before and all that comes after. I do not doubt that Anson will have to pass through dark hours, and learn, for some reason which I cannot comprehend, that we

cannot live life on our own terms, but must give up, not only the base and evil things which we desire, but the pure, sweet, and beautiful things which we recognise. I can't argue about these things—I can't prove them; but such a hope as that which I have indicated does not seem to me either unnatural or irrational. I cannot analyse or state or prove the worth and energy of love. I only know that I see in it a perfectly inexplicable force, which makes men rise above themselves and perform the impossible; and I cannot believe that that depends upon its being expressed in a human form, or that it ends with death."

"Yes," I said, "you are right and I am wrong. I was speaking blindly and petulantly, from the point of view of a silly child whose toy is broken, and whose holiday is spoilt by rain. Instead of doubting the larger force, when we see it, because we have not ourselves experienced it, we ought to wait and wonder and hope. I will try to think differently about it all. What I said amounted to this—'I cannot believe unless I see'; and what the world—or something above the world—is telling us every day and hour of our lives is simply this—that we cannot see unless we believe."



## THE WIND

At the old house where I was lately living, my window looked out on to an ancient terraced bowling-green, along one side of which skirts an avenue of big Scotch firs. On summer evenings, when the breeze blows out of the west, they whisper together softly like a falling weir; but the other night a gale sprang up, and when I awoke at some dark hour of the dawn, they roared like wide-flung breakers, while the wind volleyed suddenly in the gables and chimney-stacks, and the oaken door of my room creaked and strained. Some people find that an eerie sound; and I confess that a fitful wind, wailing desolately round the roofs of the house, gives the sense of a homeless wanderer, hurried onwards on some unwilling errand, and crying out sadly at the thought of people sleeping securely in quiet rooms, and waking to sheltered life and pleasant cares. Last night, and all day long, the wind has something boisterous and triumphant about it, as if it were bound upon some urgent business, and loved to sweep over bare woodlands and healthy hill-tops, to dive into deep valleys, set the quiet lake aswirl,

and bend the sedges all one way. It seemed impossible not to attribute to it a life and a consciousness, as of some great presence flying all abroad, and rejoicing in its might.

I remember being brought very close to the secret of the wind one Easter-tide, when I was staying at a little village called Boot in the Eskdale valley in Cumberland, a lonely little place between Scafell and the sea. We struck out one day over the great moorland to the North, towards Wast Water. There was a great steady wind against us; we drew near at last to what appeared to be the top, and far beyond it we could see low-lying moors and woods, and desolate hills behind. The wind stopped quite suddenly—or at least we came out of it into a space of silent air, with, if anything, a little gentle breeze behind us, instead of in our faces. Just ahead now were some ragged-looking rocks; from them came a sound I have never heard again, a sort of shrill humming sound. We were puzzled by the cessation of the wind, and went to the edge.

We found ourselves at the top of the great Wast Water screes, those black, furrowed precipices of rock which overhang the lower end of the lake. The reason why the wind had seemed to drop was simply this. It was blowing a raging gale on the cliff-front, and the current of air was hurled up aloft, right over our heads, leaving a quiet region with a back-draught of wind. It

was like being behind a waterfall turned upside down. But the strangest thing followed. We got to the edge, so that we could look down the steeply-channelled front, with the dark lake below; and here the wind came up with such terrific force that one could lean out against it. It rushed up like an irresistible jelly, and a bit of paper that we held was hurled a hundred feet up above us.

I wish that, when I was at school, some of these wonderful processes of air and light, of cold and heat, had been explained to me. We had some dreary science classes, when we did things like hydrostatics, and worked out the weight of columns of water; but it never seemed to have any reference to the things we were seeing every day. I never realised then that a gale only means that somewhere and somehow a great mass of air is removed, and that a wind is nothing more than a general rush of air from all sides to fill the gap. I thought of winds as just irresponsible rushes of air; and the Latin personification of them, Boreas and Zephyrus, and the rest, gave it all a freakish, fairylike flavour, which was pretty enough, but nothing more; and then, too, there were the old pictures, with furious, full-cheeked faces, like the heads of middle-aged cherubs, spouting storm on ships which leant sideways over a steeply-curdled sea. I cannot help feeling now that the beginning of all knowledge ought to be the picture of our little whirl-

ing globe, warmed by the fire of the sun, with all its seas and continents, its winds and frosts. One began at the other end too much, at the undue prominence of man; not thinking of man as a link in a chain, a creature who, by his wonderful devices, fights a better battle, and gets more out of the earth than other creatures; but rather as if all were nicely and neatly prepared for him, just to slip complacently upon the scene. One ought to learn to think of man as strangely and wonderfully permitted to be here, among all these mighty forces and mysterious powers, not as the visible lord of creation, and with everything meant to minister to him. It is a mistake, I believe, because it means that so much has to be unlearned, if one is not to shirk the great problem of life and destiny; much of our discontent and cowardice comes, I think, from our beginning by thinking that we have a right to have things arranged for our convenience and comfort, instead of its being a battle, where we have to win what peace we can!

But I have travelled far away in thought from the gale that roars in the pine-boughs outside my window, as I sit with my quiet candles burning, book on knee, and pencil in hand. There is a delicious story of George MacDonald's, which I think is called *At the Back of the North Wind*. I have not read it for years, but it used to give me a delicious thrill. It was about a little boy, I believe, who slept in a bed in a boarded stable-

loft, and who was annoyed by the wind blowing through a hole in the boards near his head. He stopped it up with a cork, I remember, and when he was in bed the cork was blown out with a bounce, and next minute there was a beautiful creature by him, a fairy all covered with rippling tresses of hair. She carried him with her over hill and dale, riding soft and warm, and night after night these airy pilgrimages went on, while she taught him how everything in the world was bound together by love and care. Well, that is a different way of apprehending the secret of the wind, apart from barometrical depressions; and it has its merits! The point, after all, is somehow or other to feel the wonder and largeness of it all, and the sense of something which is infinitely strong and kind behind our little, restless lives. One does not want to obscure that, but to feed it. One wants men to learn on the one hand how small a part of the huge mystery they are, and on the other to feel the glory and wonder of being still a part of it; and so to advance, not complacently and foolishly, as though we knew all they needed to know, and had nothing to do but to make ourselves as comfortable as possible; but rather as humble learners of a prodigious secret, beautiful beyond love and hope, of which we hardly know the millionth part; a secret in which everything has its sure and certain place, from the continent that stretches from pole to pole to the smallest atom of air that hurries on

its viewless race; all indestructible alike, and the human spirit the most immortal of all.

That is what the wind says to me to-night, as it leaps and rushes from hill to hill, surely performing its work, whatever that work may be. I fly with it in thought over the silent homesteads and the grassy downs; above the roofs of the great city, with all its twinkling lights and streaming smoke; over moorland and mountain, and out upon the sea again, to the fields of Northern ice, where its footsteps are not known.

## THE USE OF POETRY

LORD TENNYSON once went to stay with Dean Bradley, when the latter was Headmaster of Marlborough, and said to him one evening, over a pipe, that he envied Bradley with all his heart his life of hard, useful, honourable work. It is not recorded what Bradley—who, by the way, detested tobacco with all *his* heart—said in reply, but he no doubt let fall one of those courteous and pithy epigrams which came so often from his lips. But it is interesting to find that a man like Tennyson, with such a vocation and such a mission, was assailed by doubts as to the use of it all. It was not as though Tennyson waited for fits of inspiration, and dawdled in between. He worked at poetry as another man might work at accounts, diligently and faithfully. But, of course, a man of high creative genius, with the finest artistic work in hand, cannot possibly work all day and day after day at poetry. There must be interposed long spaces of quiet reflection and mental recreation. The writing of poetry is very destructive of brain tissue, and it cannot be done in a dull or weary frame of mind. Milton

wrote about forty lines a day of *Paradise Lost*, composing in his head, in bed in the morning, dictating and compressing them later in the day. Few poets would share the breezy opinion of William Morris, who said, "That talk of inspiration is all stuff! If a man cannot compose an epic poem in his head when he is weaving tapestry, he will do no good, and had better shut up!" But then Morris's *Earthly Paradise* is, after all, a sort of woven tapestry, and is a very different sort of work from *Paradise Lost* or *In Memoriam*. Morris, on one occasion, wrote eight hundred lines in a single day, and probably, as they say, established a record.

Of course, Tennyson was a man of very melancholy moods, and no doubt the sight of a busy and happy place like Marlborough, humming like a hive of bees, and governed as equably and peaceably as Bradley governed it, did make him feel that whatever was the value of any literary work, it could not have the same unquestionable and indubitable beneficence and usefulness as the work of a schoolmaster, with its close hold on human life, the momentousness of its effects upon character, and its far-reaching and germinating influence.

The work of the poet is, after all, of a secret kind; all the compliments of enthusiastic readers, all the laudation of reviewers, all the honours which the world heaps upon the head of the divine singer, cannot bring home to him the silent



ecstasies of joy and hope which quicken the souls of thousands of eager readers and disciples. The poet is a shepherd who can neither see nor hear his flock; and in the case of Tennyson, who felt his responsibility deeply, and never lost sight of the fact that his work had for its end and aim the clarifying of human vision and the nurture of high hopes and pure ideals, there must have been many hours in which he must have asked himself what it was all worth! He could not see the regeneration which he strove to bring about. Just as Ruskin felt, with an acute sense of failure and despondency, that the public loved his pretty phrases and did not care twopence about his schemes for the bettering of humanity, so Tennyson, as his later poems show, thought that the world was getting more pleasure-loving, more heedless, more low-minded year by year, and must have wondered, with a bitter sense of regret, whether he was, after all, more than a mere maker of word-melodies and harmonious cadences, which touched and pleased the ear but did not feed the heart.

There is a well-known Greek legend, how the citizens of Sparta, after a series of disasters, applied to Athens for a leader; the Athenians sent them, to their disgust, a little lame school-master called Tyrtaeus; they were wise enough not to reject the distasteful advice, and found that the contemptible creature was a great lyric poet, whose martial odes and war-songs put such heart

into their soldiers that they marched to victory once more. The legend, it may be feared, emanated from the brain of a literary man rather than from the full heart of a brigadier-general! The fragments of Tyrtæus do not display any very stimulating quality; but the motive of the story is a true one, namely, that vigorous and patriotic life is after all a lyrical sort of business, and that without imagination and fervour a nation is in danger of living on a low level, of making money, perhaps, and amassing comforts, but not enriching the blood of the world, or quickening the hopes of the future.

The poet, then, must content himself with his sweet and noble music, and must not expect either material reward, or the sort of recognition that comes to the successful banker or the victorious general. Yet even from the warlike point of view, the fact that such a poem as *The Happy Warrior* could appeal to and thrill countless hearts in generation after generation, serves at least to show that there is a romantic force in the background of a nation, which stands for something even in an era of commercial competition. Even Tennyson at Marlborough might have taken heart at the thought that all the miniature citizens of that well-ordered state were still, as a part of their daily duty, reading Virgil—the Roman Gospel, as it has been called. That, at least, may serve to indicate the marvellous vitality of beauty and noble thought, and prove, if proof

were needed, that man does not live by bread alone, but by *every* word proceeding from the mouth of God. In these days when we are so unreasonably afraid of German influence, the danger, if it exists at all, lies in the fact that the Germans are not given over to commercial enterprise alone, but have a romantic passion for artistic things, poetry and music, which are the sign if not the cause of the imaginative and adventurous spirit which makes a race patriotic and ambitious. It is the dream of victory and supremacy which makes a nation formidable, not its business habits or its mercantile transactions.

In one of Swinburne's finest lyrics, in *Atalanta in Calydon*, he speaks of the nightingale, and how she "feeds the heart of the night with fire." It is that which the poet can claim and hope to do. The nightingale herself, if she could be taken in hand by a strict political economist, and if she could be endowed with some of the common sense which our age so prudently values, might be convinced that she was a foolish creature, keeping absurdly late hours, and expending a most unreasonable amount of energy on sounds which could be equally well produced by a penny whistle. But if an individual or a nation gets into a material frame of mind, there are disasters ahead. The man and the nation may live for a while a very comfortable and well-ordered life, do excellent work, and enjoy a well-earned dinner at the end of the day. But it is not that spirit

which makes a nation, or keeps it strong. What is really the hopeful sign about a race is that it enjoys doing fine, unreasonable, heroic things, not unattended by plenty of risk and discomfort, which are indeed considerable elements in the fun. Schoolmaster and poet alike do their best work if they can inspire and stimulate that sort of spirit; and if at the same time they can show that activity is best enjoyed, if it is chivalrous and tender-hearted as well, and that it is on the wrong lines if it consists in boisterous and inconsiderate merriment, and amuses itself at the expense of the weak and frail. The hooliganism of the day is a hopeful sign, because it means an overflow of high spirits; and what we have to do is to turn those high spirits into the right channels, not to endeavour to suppress and eliminate them altogether. The value of Tennyson's most popular work is that it upholds the knightly ideal, with plenty of hard blows, and splintered spears, side by side with a generous and compassionate spirit. It is, I think, a sign that some change is passing gradually over our national temperament, that the spirit of the time is somehow alien to poetry—that great poets are non-existent, and that the reading public turns away from poetry. But I think that the imaginative temper of the time is fed by romances; and so far from thinking it a sign of decadence and mental decay that such a cataract of novels pours from the press, I believe it to be a sign of the existence of a fresh

and childlike spirit, that wants to be told stories, and likes to lose itself in the thought of other lives and exciting adventures. I believe it shows that we have still plenty of freshness and zest in the race, and I should not in the least welcome it as a sign of grace if the taste for novels were to be succeeded by a taste for handbooks of political economy and manuals of bookkeeping. Of course, one wishes people to be serious and sensible, but I cannot say that I wish them to be dull and prudish. I believe myself that in many ways our own age resembles the Elizabethan age, and that there is an abundance of the adventurous spirit abroad. I do not at all wish to see Englishmen prepared to work twelve hours a day on low wages, and not to need any sort of amusement. Such a time as the present has its evils, no doubt, but a nation is in a far more hopeful condition when it has plenty of high spirits that need curbing, than when it is sunk in apathetic diligence. And the use of poetry in the best and widest sense is to keep alive that eager and generous temper, which makes a nation into a race of kings instead of a race of slaves.

## WAR

I SAW quoted the other day, in a review, some bits of Mr. Newbolt's poetry, which lay like flowers or crystals on the page. Mr. Newbolt is a true lyrical poet, always and invariably beautiful and accomplished and melodious; and a great deal more than that! There is a lyric on a stream, which is one of the sweetest and purest pieces of word-music I know, like the liquid discourse of a flute, that goes and returns upon itself. And he is a master, too, of a very different kind of music, which stirs the heart and sets the blood dancing, as though a trumpet uttered with all its might a great fanfare. The test to me of a fine lyric is when it sends a physical shiver down the back, and fills the eyes with sudden tears; and this is what *Drake's Drum* does. That refrain of "Captain, art tha sleepin' there below?" is a stroke of high genius. Mr. Newbolt and Mr. Kipling are pre-eminent among our poets for a certain faultless emphasis of accent, in which every single syllable has its value, and which gives one the impression, which is the test of perfect art, that the writers are making the words do exactly as

they are bid. It was in the train that I read the article, and I wished I had a volume of Mr. Newbolt's within reach, to gladden the heart, as all true poetry does, when one is in the happy mood.

Then I read a fine grave poem called *Clifton Chapel*, addressed to a son, reminding him of what his father had thought and hoped at the old school, and what he, too, must try to think and hope. I read on till I came to the lines:

“To honour, while you strike him down,  
The foe that comes with fearless eyes.”

I dropped the book and sat thinking. One does not want to be feeble-minded, nor what is called sentimental, but somehow it made me shudder. Ought one really to try to feel that? And if so, ought one not also to feel the opposite?—

“To honour, while *he* strikes *you* down,  
The foe that comes with fearless eyes.”

Is not the essence of the triumphant thought in the poet's mind, after all, the fact that *oneself* should be victorious? One can afford, it would seem, to honour a foe, if one can be sure of laying him low. But why touch the note at all? Is one bound to accept the fact that war is a noble thing in itself? Are we really right in thinking that combat is inseparable from the life of humanity? All depends, it seems to me, on

the motive which lies behind a war. In the line I have quoted it seems to be taken for granted that the foe himself is a *preux chevalier*, a soldier of honour and courage, a noble and a gentle knight. If war is made for the sake of righting some horrible wrong, of setting free a country from cruel and barbarous misuse by tyrants and evil governors, then it is a thing to be proud of, if it leaves a legacy of peace. But what could be the motive of a contest such as is here indicated? Some aggression, some intention of conquest, some sort of aggrandisement, some sense of wounded honour, which implies a wrong done and sustained? Ought one really to desire, and to teach one's children to desire, to meet in fight some man of as high courage and honour as oneself, and to leave him, for all his hopes and energies, dead upon the field? Can one look upon that as a glorious fact, a thing to dwell upon with satisfaction in quiet moments, to remember how our adversary lay bleeding at our feet, to fire our sons with the wish to do likewise?

It seems to me a very strange thing that one should value so highly the priceless privilege of life, should feel so strongly the justice of doing a murderer to death, in a ghastly kind of pageant; and yet that one should be able to believe that under different circumstances, of invasion or aggression, it is a splendid and heroic thing to dismiss a fellow-creature into darkness!



It is easy enough for a poet to adorn his tale, as Tennyson did in *Maud*, with the thought of a nation, sunk in commercial materialism, being set all aglow by the pleasure of tearing invaders limb from limb. But it seems to me that war is, after all, but a barbarous and horrible convention, which in spite of all that Christianity and civilisation can do, stands out a blood-stained and a cruel evil among our wiser and more temperate designs. To glorify war seems to me but the unchaining and hounding on of the ferocious beast that lies below the surface in most of us. To condone it is like defending the institution of slavery on the ground that cruel treatment may develop a noble endurance in the downtrodden slave, like encouraging bullying in schools that the bullied may learn hardness and courage.

I think that we ought to regard war as a horrible ultimate possibility. If a nation loses its head with greed and excitement, and invades a peaceful territory, then the invaded land must appeal to force and sternly repel the aggressor. But think of such wars as the Napoleonic wars! If a murderer deserves the penalty of death and shame, if he is thought of as going into the presence of a wrathful God, with blood upon his hands, what of Napoleon himself, who poured a cataract of the best and strongest young lives of his own countrymen into the grave, not only with unconcern and indifference, but amid the applause and wonder of his own and succeeding

generations? And for what? To set his family upon an imperial throne, and to put France at the head of a European empire. There was not a thought of helping anyone or benefiting anyone. Just a thirst for what is called glory, a determination to let the world feel the weight of one's hand. Surely the one hope of the world is the hope of living life in peace and energy and security, in toil and virtue? To give opportunities to all, to protect the weak, to restrain the cruel and selfish—that is the aim. And yet, if only murder be practised on a great enough scale, and under fixed rules of combat, it is to be regarded as a heroic thing! On the one side, one is to try to fight the ravages of disease and calamity, to think of life as a precious thing and a rich inheritance; and, on the other, one is to sacrifice the best young blood and the highest hopes of a nation, in a process which hampers and penalises the prosperity of the conquering nation as well as that of the conquered. Then there is all the ghastly waste of human toil in preparing armaments, all subtracted from the working power of the world. It is not as though war were the only disciplinary force at work among us. The conquest of Nature, the subduing of the forces of the world, the replenishing of the earth, can make and keep men strong and virile enough.

I had an interview in the sad days of the Boer War with a widow who had given two sons to

the service of the country. They were young men of the finest promise—strong, kindly, fair-minded, honourable. One had died, after horrible suffering, of wounds received in action; one had died of enteric in a field-hospital. The mother was full of noble and un murmuring resignation; but it made me shudder to think that these two young men, who might have lived long and valued lives, the kindly fathers of strong children, should thus, and for such ends as these, have been lost to the earth.

People used to feel the same approval about duelling. If a man's honour was insulted, there was nothing for it but to fight, and the recipient of the insult might lose his life as easily as the insulter. The thing now seems too idiotic for words, and who can say that our courage has abated in consequence of the abolition of duelling?

I think it is probable that in the days to come men will think with a bewildered compassion of the time when war was an accepted practice. They will say to themselves that it is incredible that men should ever have thought it a noble thing to let the brute passions loose. They will see that the gift of God is life and health and happy labour and joyful union; and that men should have thought it admirable to spill each other's blood for vainglory and for passion and for greed, will seem an inconceivable and an intolerable thing.

It is not that I should wish to deter men from

risking their lives for a generous or a daring cause. I do not feel any indignation against explorers or aviators or mountain-climbers or mariners, for being willing to take their lives in their hands. That is a noble spirit enough. A man's life is his own; he must not take it out of cowardice or despair, but he may risk it for an achievement if he will. But to hold it glorious to risk it in the mere taking of other lives seems to me a brutal and a barbarous thing; and what makes it baser still is that ultimately, as a rule, it is a mere question of property which is involved.

Suppose that we imagine two strong nations, suffering from a great pressure of over-population, in a large island, with no outlet. Emigration must, for the sake of the argument, be considered impossible. The strange thing is that, with our present ideas about war, we imagine that if the two governments conferred together, and decided that they would each put to death all the weakly and tainted and broken lives, that would be thought a ghastly and revolting procedure. And yet we should, on the whole, approve of the two nations going to war, and sacrificing thousands of the best and most vigorous lives in the process, leaving untouched all the weakly and ineffective stock of the nations. That is a very bewildering thought, and I find it impossible to disentangle it.

What is almost as bewildering is to think of

the things that occurred in the Boer War, when on a night before a battle, the two forces met in friendly good-humour beside their entrenchments, sang their songs, jested and laughed, and even passed refreshments across to each other on bayonet points, all the time quite prepared on the next day to kill as many of the opposing force as they could.

Does it not look as though we were under some strange and evil enchantment in the matter? We are trying, many of us, to solve the constructive problem, we are trying to accommodate our differences, to educate, to civilise, to encourage labour and order and peace; and yet in the back of our minds lies the fixed determination that if a quarrel is provoked, we will devastate as far as we can each other's homes and circles; and with this horrible fact before us, that a war skims, so to speak, the very cream of humanity, and sweeps away, not the intemperate and the feeble-minded and the invalided, but the lusty and cheerful and strong.

The truth is that we do not yet live by reason, but by instinct. When our passions rise they carry us off our feet. But the misery is that those men who have the vision—the poets and the preachers and the prophets—are drawn away by the fury and the excitement and the intoxication of the fight and the fray, into thinking and speaking of war as though it had something Divine and noble about it, instead of its being,

as it is, the boisterous passion of the animal within us, the instinct to kick and bite and tear, to see blood flow and limbs writhe, and to rejoice with demoniacal gusto in the shameful havoc that we have it in our power to do.

## ON MAKING FRIENDS

FRIENDSHIP is one of the cheapest and most accessible of pleasures; it requires no outlay, and no very serious expenditure of time or trouble. It is quite easy to make friends, if one wants to; and in the second place, just as poetry can be written while one is weaving tapestry, so friendships can be made, and the best friendships are often made, while one is doing something else. One can make friends while one works, travels, eats, walks. I am not now speaking of mere pleasant acquaintances, but the friendships where each friend feels a certain need for the other, the friendships where one desires to compare ideas and experiences, where it is a pleasure to agree, because it is so delightful to find that one's friend thinks the same as oneself, and an even greater pleasure to differ, because the contrast is so wonderful and interesting. Of course, one cannot hope to have an indefinite number of great friends. The laws of time and space intervene, because if one is always plunging into new friendships, it is difficult to keep up the old. And then, too, a certain touch of jealousy is apt to creep

in. There is surely no greater pleasure in the world than to feel that one is needed, welcomed, missed, and loved; and it is difficult to acquiesce, with perfect generosity and good-humour, if one feels that someone else is more valued and needed than oneself. But it is possible, fortunately, to reach a point of friendship with another when one knows that there can never be any suspicion or jealousy or misunderstanding again; and that even if one does not see the friend or hear from him, yet that one will find him exactly the same, and take up the old relation exactly where it was suspended.

It is surely one of the best and simplest pleasures in the world, when one realises that there has sprung up, one does not know how or when, a sense of mutual interest and confidence and affection between oneself and another. It betrays itself by a glance, a gesture, a word, and one becomes aware that there is a secret bond, which cannot exactly be defined or analysed, between oneself and another—"because it was me, because it was you," as the old French writer said. I am not now speaking of the further and more mysterious process which mortals call falling in love, because that is a wholly different emotion, which is complicated by fiery and agitating impulses; but what I mean is a tranquil and contented emotion, of which the basis is a certain trust. We inherit no doubt from our palæolithic ancestors a distinct combativeness, a tendency to suspect



strangers, to growl and bristle like a dog. This translates itself in modern life into a tendency to be on one's guard and not to give oneself away. But friendship comes when one can feel: "Well, whatever happens, So-and-so is on my side. I can say what I think to him, and I shall not be misunderstood; we may disagree, but it will be without hostility, and our criticisms will not be resented. If I am misrepresented by other people, he will be sure to stick up for me; if I want help and advice, he will give it me, and what a pleasure it will be if there is anything which I can do for him!"

Of course, when I said that the process of making friends is easy, I do not forget that it is much easier for some people than for others. I know two or three men, and they are very pathetic figures, who desire friendship above everything, and need it, too, and who yet find it extraordinarily difficult to make friends. They are formidable, or tactless; they say the right thing to the wrong person, or the wrong thing to the right person. They are brilliant when they ought to be simple, and voluble when they ought to be quiet. They make too much fuss about it, and friendship ought to come gradually and insensibly. One can't conquer people or take them by storm. One may get admiration by showing off, but one cannot get affection; and the worst of people who have a great desire to make friends is that it tends to make them wish

to show off, to dazzle, and attract. We English are curious people; we are intensely emotional and sentimental, though we are not always credited with it by foreigners; we are supposed to be haughty, insular, dull as our skies and treacherous as our climate. Perfidious Albion! The one thing we pride ourselves upon is our blunt and transparent honesty, and yet we are believed in Europe to be the most faithless of the nations. We say that the Englishman's word is as good as his bond; and with this foreigners agree, because they believe that both are frauds; that our word is deceptive, and our bond is not worth the paper it is written on. Yet in our own friendships we are, I believe, reliable, faithful, slow to take offence, quick to make allowance, ready to forgive and able to forget.

But though I am sure that English people have rather a genius for friendship, it is curious how often it is confined to our earlier years. School and college friendships sometimes last through life, and are often really romantic relations; but as we get older we mostly lose the power. We have made up our bundle of preferences, and it is tiresome to add to them. I have often thought how unnecessarily cautious people get in England as they grow older. I find myself often sitting next some one at dinner, and saying to myself: "I am sure I should like you and trust you, if only you would say what you really think, and not keep lurking behind a fence of conventional

opinions. Why is it necessary for us to talk about things in which we neither of us feel the smallest interest? We have both of us experiences, views, ideas. Why cannot we put them into words? Why must we play this tiresome kind of lawn-tennis, you serving a statement, and I feebly returning it?" I sometimes think that this apparent want of frankness, this shrinking from reality is what makes us seem to foreigners to be diplomatic when we are really only shy. Yet there are finer things said about friends and friendships in English poetry and prose than anywhere else that I know of, which show one that whatever we may say or pretend to think about emotion, the thing is there, and glowing with a heart of fire.

Well, then, suppose the process over, the fencing done, the conventional diplomacies put away, the friend made and trusted and loved, what do we expect to feel and to give and to receive?

First of all, let me respectfully say, neither to tell our friend of his faults nor to be told of our own! That may be set aside except in urgent necessity. It may be a sad and reluctant duty, once in a lifetime, to tell a friend of some fault of which he is unconscious, and which is really doing him harm. But as a rule we know our own faults better than anyone else! Still less do we expect a constant parade of sentiment, a waving of the banners and a blowing of the trumpets of emotion. We have done with all

that too, except, perhaps, in a happy instant, when we must express our gratitude and joy. What we expect and what we get is the test of all relationships, when we can show our inmost mind without apology or fear; when there is no need to avoid this subject or that, but when we can talk plainly and without affectation of what interests, amuses, pleases, vexes, distresses, moves us, without any thought of wanting to produce an effect, or to impress or win; and we can listen, too, to our friend's talk without either patience or impatience. It is neither a sentimental business nor an intellectual business; it is simply the recognition of the fact that here are two spirits strangely like, strangely unlike, bound on the same pilgrimage, without secrets from each other, only happy in companionship, and believing that it does not end here, or now, or anywhere.

There is nothing finer or more beautiful in the world than a man or woman who can go through life thus, proffering to others that kind of faith and trust and fellowship, not for the sake of selfish convenience or to beguile a tiresome hour, but out of sweetness and kindness and goodwill and trustfulness. I have known some few such, and I consider it the great blessing of my life. They are as often as not wholly unconscious of their great gift, and they believe others to be as guileless, as frank, and as kindly as themselves, for the simple reason that their own goodness shines like the sun on all round them, making

the coldest heart warm for a while. Of course, we cannot all be like that, because there comes into it the mysterious force called charm, which makes the word and the gesture and the smile of some people so attractive and so beautiful; but we can avoid the things that hold us back from others—the grim statement, the peremptory judgment, the cheap sneer, the suspicious caution; if we cannot all be warm-hearted and generous, we need none of us be captious, irritable, prosy, censorious. “I can’t make out why people don’t like me,” said a peevish and cynical man to the one friend he had on earth. It was no time for compliments, and the friend, with a smile, said “Can’t you?” There was a silence, and then the other said, with a nod and a smile, “Yes, I can!”

## THE YOUNGER GENERATION

THERE is nothing which has so completely altered in the course of the last fifty years, and altered, in my belief, so wholly and entirely for the better, as the method of bringing up children. No doubt parents were always fond of their children, and proud of them for not very demonstrable reasons. But fifty years ago children were much more strictly handled, repressed, kept out of sight, and generally dragooned, than is at all the case now. They were paraded, of course, neatly brushed and washed and habited, on fit occasions—at luncheon, and perhaps before dinner; but they were expected to hold their tongues, to eat what was put before them; their opinions were not asked, and if expressed, were firmly snubbed. They were left much more to themselves, and had to rule their own community with superficial decorum. The result of this was that, in the old books, children were represented as a species of charming hooligan. They always “got into mischief” if they could, and relapsed into a sort of savagery if they were not under control. But now the contrast between, so to speak, the public and the

private life of children is not nearly so much marked. They live much more with their elders, and being treated as reasonable members of society, they actually like, and, indeed, are rather dependent upon, their older friends. instead of being frankly bored by them. Of course, one always knew as a child that elder people, if they only *would* play, were the best of playmates. They were stronger, fairer, more inventive. But they often would not play. They were "busy," and a kind of dull grimness fell upon them suddenly. and for no apparent reason.

But now children are apt to pervade a house, to take their elders captive, to demand co-operation and sympathy. The day is much more laid out with reference to them, and they have a social part to play. It is just the same at private schools. I was myself at a big private school of the harder sort. The tone was wholesome and kindly; but we were left very much to ourselves, and had to make our own arrangements. If we were simply too ill to get along, we went reluctantly to the matron. But now the assistant-masters play with the boys, talk to them, see that they change their boots, mother them from morning to night.

The old ideal was a Spartan one; the design was to get rid of softness, at the expense, no doubt, of the frail and timid and delicate, to make boys independent by leaving them to find out what their duties were, and punishing them

severely if they were unbusinesslike. Boys certainly grew older and harder more quickly, while the gentler natures had very often rather a bad time of it.

Again, look at the difference in the position of the governess. The typical old-fashioned governess of the story-book was shy, plain, and prim. If her charges were unruly, she had to fight as with beasts at Ephesus. She came to dinner if it was convenient, the servants were rude to her, the mistress of the house was kind but peremptory. Now, on the contrary, one sees a perfectly-appointed and self-possessed young lady, the social equal of her employers, and generally much better educated. She can play games, she can make jokes, and if she gets on well with the children, she ends by ruling the whole household. Woe betide the servant who is rude to her; and as for the children, they adore her, and look upon her as a sort of fairy godmother, standing between them and the wrath of the powers that be.

The change in the whole situation was, of course, a hazardous experiment; but it came by nature, it was not deliberately introduced. It was hardly possible to say for certain, until lately, whether the new régime was going to be a success. Was it going to end in making the children effeminate, selfish, peevish, helpless, inconsiderate? Was it all a sign of decadence and sentimentality?



It is possible now to answer these questions with a decided negative. The results have been, so far as one can see, wholly good. The twenty years of my own professional life as a school-master constituted a crucial period. The boys who came to Eton at that date were boys educated on the new plan. I have not the smallest doubt that they were incomparably nicer, kinder, more humane, more considerate, more reasonable, and not in the least less active, or spirited, or conscientious, than the boys of my own school-days. Of course, they were not perfect. There is a good deal of the native savage about the growing boy. He is self-absorbed, messy, greedy, unreflective, conventional. But he comes to a public school expecting to find other boys kindly and friendly; he no longer looks upon the authorities as his natural enemies. He anticipates that even if they are strict and quick-tempered, they will, probably, take a human interest in him, and will not be cruel or malicious. He finds the path smoothed for him from the outset. Bullying has practically disappeared, corporal punishment is fast becoming extinct, work that a boy cannot understand is explained to him. His reasons are no longer treated as excuses. His rights in the matter of exercise are safeguarded. His health is looked after rationally. There is plenty of discipline: but the whole life is healthier, happier, more humane; and there is far less of the vague sense of alarm, of impending cata-

strophe in the background, than used to be the case even in my own schooldays.

I cannot see any point upon which the *laudator temporis acti* can lay his finger and say that things have gone downhill. Of course, there are plenty of tiresome and stupid pessimists about, who utter absurd grumbles and diatribes about the luxury and effeminacy of the younger generation; but with every wish to encourage frank criticism and to accept definite evidence, I cannot see the smallest sign of deterioration. When our boys had to go out and fight in the Boer War, they went and roughed it with a keenness, a gaiety, and a courage which was patent and undeniable. And now that I have an opportunity of observing the younger generation up at the University, it seems to me that the net gain is simply incontestable. I think that undergraduates seem in some ways younger than they were, and there is a conventional respect for athletics which is tiresome, but which stands for a wholesome love of physical activity and the open air which I should be sorry to see diminished.

The other day an old friend of mine came to stay at Cambridge; his name was put down at the Union, and he spent a good deal of time there. He said to me that he had two criticisms to make—that the young men were very badly dressed, and that they were extraordinarily polite and kind to him. “Why,” he said, “if I want a book or a paper, or if I wish to be shown my

way about, any young man whom I ask wants to go and fetch the book or paper for me, or insists on personally conducting me round. I am sure," he added, "that in my time we should have considered an elderly clergyman, who infested the Union, as a bore, and we should have been very short with him."

As far as the bad dressing goes, I fear I am wholly on the side of the undergraduate. I agree with Solon, who legislated against expensive dress, saying that rich and poor ought all to be dressed alike. The present tradition of dress is simple, comfortable, healthy, and cheap; and the undergraduate is quite capable of turning out very smart upon a state occasion. As for his increased courtesy and kindness, it is perfectly true, and an immense improvement upon the rougher and more independent manners of my own day.

The point is, I think, to bring up children to be happy. Of course, they must be obedient, and conscientious. But children only want a motive, and there is far more potent a force at work if they learn to do their duty for the sake of those whom they love, and because they love them, than because of an abstract and unintelligible code of rules. The aim is to get them somehow habituated to right conduct, and the simpler and more direct the motive the better. Then, too, one wants children to find the world a friendly and a kindly place, and to feel themselves welcome

in it. There are plenty of hard, sorrowful, and dreadful things waiting for them, which no one can escape. But we need not add to those terrors the terrors of harshness and unkindness at the outset. One does not want to make people stoical and cynical; one wants to make them brave and affectionate. The bravery that comes of affection is a far better thing than the stoicism which comes of cynicism. One of my own terrors as a child and schoolboy was the fear of some penalty falling on me out of the blue for some transgression that I had not understood nor intended. This was not a fear of justice, but a fear of unprovoked calamity, and I cannot see that it did me any good or improved my outlook. One wants to encourage children to do what is right, not to frighten them into it. There is a reasonable fear of the consequences of ill-doing which is a very different thing from the inconsequent terror of undeserved affliction.

I will go a step further, and say that the boys among my own pupils who turned out just what one would wish boys to be—manly, simple, keen, and kind—were boys of nice and wholesome dispositions who had been rather spoilt at home. Of course, it is not safe to spoil children, because one cannot be sure that there is the nice disposition behind; but if a boy is right-minded and sensible, a little spoiling does him no harm. "Spoiling" is not the right word quite, but I can find no other—and it is exactly what the

gruff and grim critic would call spoiling. The sort of thing I mean is giving the children a good deal of simple pleasure, indulging them in reasonable ways, letting them choose, in a general way, what they will do to amuse themselves, what they will eat and wear; and letting them see quite plainly that their parents love them, and desire their company, and want them to be happy. That concealment of affection which used to be considered wholesome is a mistake. The result was, on the boys of whom I am speaking, that they in turn adored their parents, wanted to be with them, and learned to want *them* to be happy. And thus these boys got into the way of being considerate, kind to their brothers and sisters, and perfectly sure that they were not in the way, but that the world was peopled with affectionate and reasonable persons. The result with such boys was simply this: that if one had to enforce discipline with them, and was content to explain the reason for it, they acquiesced willingly and graciously; while the wish not to distress or grieve their parents in any way was simply supreme. I am not pleading for a luxurious, easy-going, pleasure-loving kind of education at all. I think that there ought to be a very strict code of perfectly obvious discipline behind, but not mechanical discipline. For if children know that they are loved, they do obey orders, and obey them willingly; and a very little willing obedience takes a child a long way further along

the right road than any amount of rebellious obedience.

Whether we like it or not, there is no going back; and I for one have no wish to go back. What we need in this, as in many other directions, is more frankness and sincerity. The old idea was that children were to be taught their place, and the result was that they were not taught their place at all. They occupied, then as now, a foremost place in their parents' hearts and minds; and they were often kept deliberately ignorant of this, and led rather to suppose that they were troublesome little creatures, who were rather in the way than otherwise. It often happened, later in life, that a boy found out, by falling into disgrace, the depth of unknown affection that had surrounded him; if he had known it before, it would have been an additional motive to do nothing that would cause pain and grief to those who loved him.

I remember well hearing my father, late in his life, deplore the fact that he had thought it right to be so strict a schoolmaster. "If I could have it all over again," he said, "I would try to drive less and to lead more. Driving," he added, "gets one quickly past the immediate obstacle, but that is not the point; the real aim ought to be to develop character, and that can only be done by leading."

## READING

I SUPPOSE it is because writing books is known to be my trade that strangers whom I meet, often, out of courtesy and kindness of course, speak to me about books. And I suppose that it is from some lack of courtesy and kindness that I often find it so difficult to do my part, to make due responses to the friendly versicles. It is held by most people that anyone who reads books can talk about them, but as a matter of fact, though most of the people I know read books, very few indeed can talk about them. Books, pictures, music, scenery, and people are all difficult things to talk about, because they are not wholly definite and tangible things, but depend so enormously for their value upon something in the mind and heart of the persons who read, see, hear, and observe them.

Just as certain chemicals will remain quiescent if they are mixed with one set of substances, but if they are mixed with another set they rise in foam and vapour, so a book requires to be mixed with something in the soul of the reader, before there is any motion or energy put forth. Even

the people who feel a book cannot always talk about it. But at the least a book must be read with a certain critical apprehension to be worth anything, and not in obedience to a fashion, or a review, or a friend's recommendation. To read a book, in my own case, is always a sort of combat, in which I ask myself whether the author is going to overcome me, and persuade me, and convince me, or even vex me. And the whole point about a book is not whether it is brilliant, or well arranged, or well written, but whether it has a real life of its own. It need not necessarily be like life. The novels of Dickens are not in the least like life, but they have an overpowering life of their own. The difference between books—I am speaking now mainly of fiction—is whether you say, "That could not have happened—that is untrue to life," or whether you say, "That is not at all like my experience of life, but it exists and lives." Many people are, I think, too deferential to books, and if books are well written and have a well-known name on the title-page, many readers will accept them as good and bow down before them. I could name authors, though I will not, who began by writing a good book, and made a name by it, who have never written anything else worth reading. Sometimes it is the same book again, with different names and places; and sometimes it becomes a mere mechanical business, and the author does not pour his mind and heart into his books any more. I do not myself



think that it is of any use to read a book in a deferential spirit. The writer's business is to lay you flat if he can, to make you feel the active presence of forces and influences, to rouse, startle, interest, amuse, satisfy.

I am sure that the advantages and benefits of reading are greatly exaggerated. It is an innocent way of passing time, of course, but the time that we pass is not worth comparing to the time that we use; and I am not sure that even wasting time may not be better than merely passing it, because there is some spirit about that. Reading poor books may, of course, be strictly regarded by laborious people as a way of easing off a mental strain. I have a friend who works very hard, and who finds that if he works on until he goes to bed he cannot sleep. So he reads what he calls "garbage," a novel a night, and he finishes it generally within an hour; but that is mere unbending, like playing patience.

But real reading, which is deliberately putting oneself in contact with another mind, ought to be like concentrated talk. A writer is talking, and he is missing out all the half-formed and slipshod sentences, which make up so large a part of ordinary talk. He is doing his best; and real reading cannot be pure recreation; it must mean a certain amount of observing and judging. Our ancestors used to think that all well-conducted people should put in a certain amount of what was called solid reading, and there were plenty

of old-fashioned, serious households where novel-reading in the morning was thought to be dissipation. I think that this is out of date, and I am not sure that I wholly regret it, because I am not certain that reading is of any use unless you care about it. Solid reading was history, biography, science, theology, and classical literature—and the odd thing was that Shakespeare was solid reading and Walter Scott was not. As to reading for the sake of general information, it all depends upon what use you are going to make of it. If you read in order that you may understand the development of modern problems, or, better still, because you care to know what people were like in times past, what they did and endured, and why they did it or endured it, it is an excellent occupation. But if you read because you like to stock your mind, like a warehouse, or because you like feeling superior, or being thought intellectual, then it is useless, or worse than useless.

And of all fruitless reading, the reading of books about books is the worst, if you do not go on to read the books themselves. That is like reading the news of the Stock Exchange if you have no money, or reading Bradshaw if you are confined permanently to your bed. I do not mean that I desire to make people read from the right motive or else not read at all, because one has no right to interfere with other people's ways and wishes. But I do not think it right that it

should be vaguely supposed that there is anything dignified or useful about mere reading, or that people ought to be proud of doing it, any more than they are proud of eating and sleeping.

The ground, too, is all cumbered with foolish maxims about reading. Bacon said that reading made a full man. That is true in a sense. I know some people who are unpleasantly full, bulging and distorted with knowledge undigested. But what Bacon meant was a well-stored, unencumbered mind, which can reach down the knowledge it wants from the right shelf. Then, again, it is often said that writers have no biographies but their own works—and that is pure nonsense. Statesmen and generals and men of science have often no biographies, because their work was done in the world, and has gone into the world. But writers are just the very people about whom it is worth reading, if one loves their books, because their biographies show what made them think as they did, and how they came to cast such a transfiguring light on ordinary things. Again, I have often heard serious men, especially schoolmasters, say that it is wrong to read magazines, because one gets only snippets of knowledge; but that is not only what most people want, but exactly what they get out of bigger books with infinitely more trouble. I think that the miscellaneous reading in modern magazines, so full of all sorts of curious and interesting things, is the very way to open people's minds

and touch their imagination, and make them feel that the world is a very wide and exciting place.

I do not wish to decry the real intellectual life. That is a very noble thing, lived at a high altitude and in rarified air, and from it flow many of the ideas and thoughts that make life worth living for the next generation. But for ordinary minds the thing is to think clearly about simple things, and feel generously and eagerly about life. A great deal of the trouble of the world is made by well-meaning, muddled people, men and women who tamely accept and preach traditions and conventions, and still more by stupid and tyrannical people, who are unsympathetic and unimaginative, and bully those who do not agree with them. What one wants to encourage people to do is to live eagerly and hopefully in the thoughts of noble-minded men of genius—men, let us say, like Tennyson and Browning, Carlyle and Ruskin, who lived gallant and enthusiastic lives, and saw the sunrise further off than duller natures. But it is useless to go to these great men only because it is the correct thing to do, and because one feels a fool if one does not know about Rabbi Ben Ezra, or the Stones of Venice. Of course, one wants people to care about such things, but one does not want them to care for ugly reasons.

There is nothing in which dishonesty or pretentiousness punishes itself so severely as it does with reading. It is like practising religion because other people think better of you for doing

so. It is like keeping the manna too long, like offering money for the fire of the Spirit. Instead of helping people to be wise and tolerant and generous, it makes them despise true feeling and beautiful thought; because the aim of life is to meet it with a noble curiosity and a courageous frankness. It does not need an intellectual person to do that; I know some very simple people, who never open a book, who yet look life very straight in the face, mend what they can, help others along, and do their best to get rid of the ugly giants and beasts who infest the path of pilgrimage.

And thus, as I say, reading can be, if it is done simply and instinctively, a very harmless thing; and if it is done eagerly and enthusiastically, it can be a very fine thing, like the listening to the talk of great persons—not overhearing it, but having it addressed deliberately to oneself; or it can be a very feeble and even pernicious thing, if it is done ungenerously and for ulterior motives; because the dangerous things of life are the things that make us self-satisfied and complacent, and give us the evil right of thinking contemptuously about others. But of course one ought to know something of the glory and beauty of the world about us, and not to be satisfied with our own little round of trivial cares and interests. There is a touching story of a man, travelling in South America, who met an aged Roman Catholic priest in a very out-of-the-way place. He entered into

talk with the old man, who seemed unfit for rough travel, and asked him what he was doing. "Oh, just seeing the world," said the priest, with a tired smile. The traveller said, "Is it not rather late in life to begin?" "Well, I will tell you how it is," said the old man. "I have lived and worked all my life in a very quiet little place. A year ago I had a bad illness, and knew that I should die. I was weary, and glad to go; and I am afraid I was proud of my long and simple service. While I was thinking thus, I saw someone was standing by me, a young man with a strange brightness on his face; and then I saw it was an angel. He said to me, 'What do you expect?' I said: 'I am waiting upon God, and I hope that because I have served Him so long He will show me the glory of Paradise.' The angel did not smile, but looked at me rather sternly, and then said: 'No; you have taken so little trouble to see the glory of His world here that you must not expect that you will see the glory of that other place.' And then in a moment he was gone, and all my pride was gone too. I got well from that moment; and then I gave up my work, and determined that I would spend the little money I had saved in trying to see something of the beauty of the world; and I am seeing it, and I find it beautiful beyond words."













